

A *W. Clarke*  
**P R E S I D E N T**  
O F  
**F E M A L E P E R F E C T I O N .**

Presented to the serious Meditation  
and perusal of all modest WOMEN,  
who desire to live under the Go-  
vernment of Vertue, and are  
obedient to her Laws.

Containing an Historicall discourse of the  
Best and principallest for Holiness and  
Vertue of that SEX.

Illustrated with sundry *Poems* and *Figures*,  
pertinent to the Story.

---

By a Person of Honour.

---

—Luke 1. 28. *Hail, thou that art highly favour-  
ed, the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among  
women.*

---

L O N D O N ,

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yard, near the West end. 1656.

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R  
in

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TO THE MOST  
Happy Mistresse of all  
imaginable Graces, which  
beautifie and ennoble both bo-  
dy and minde, the Lady  
*Theophila Coke.*

*Madame,*

**M**Y Motives for  
the Dedicati-  
on of this en-  
suing Treatise to your  
a 3 La-

---

*The Epistle*

---

Ladiship, are three; your Knowledge, your Vertue, and my owne Obligation. For the first; as it is to you a singular Ornament, and Content, so is it to me a speciall comfort; for you cannot delight more to understand, then I doe to be understood. Had I written to your Ladiship in the Roman Language, the French, the Italian, or the Spa-

---

*Dedicatory.*

---

Spanish, they had beene  
almost as familiar to you  
as this your native  
Tongue, in which you  
are Mistresse of so great  
an Elegancy, that no  
words are so fit as your  
owne, to eternize your  
owne actions. But these  
are only the conveyances  
of Learning, the vast bo-  
dy whereof you have fa-  
thom'd, and in every se-  
verall part of it are Mi-

---

## *The Epistle*

---

stresse of as much, as the  
want of an **A**cademicke  
education, and the mani-  
fold divertments incident  
to your sexe, permit. **A**nd  
of this inestimable trea-  
sure, Modesty keeps the  
key, and shuts out **O**sten-  
tation, not suffering a  
word to issue forth with-  
out a Grace to attend it.  
Hence it comes to passe,  
that as it is impossible to  
handle perfumes without  
bea-

---

*Dedictory.*

---

earing away part of their  
ent; so to converse with  
you without favouring  
of your goodnesse. Nor  
does your Discourse a-  
one relish of your sweet  
Disposition; for you reade  
not of a vertue, which you  
orthwith put not into  
ct, & adde to it a greater  
beauty, then it had in the  
example from which  
you deriv'd it. The consi-  
deratiō, Madam, of these  
your

---

## *The Epistle*

---

your Excellencies contri-  
firm'd in me a beliefe, that  
this portraiture ( though  
imperfect) of the primag  
President of femall Peleo  
fection, would prove the  
Present most acceptable  
to your Ladiship, the  
whose innocency yo<sup>r</sup> Su  
make as neer an approach  
as any thing mortall cast  
doe. Should I say yo<sup>r</sup> co  
are without sinne, for  
should impiously conwi  
tra

---

*Dedatory.*

---

contradict the Scriptures;  
should I say you have a-  
ny, I should unjustly goe  
against mine own know-  
ledge; for neither I, nor I  
think, Envy her self could  
ever yet discover in you  
the least imperfection.  
Sure I am if you have in-  
firmities, they are inte-  
castate, unlesse you place  
your owne Conscience  
for a witnesse, which it  
will not better be-  
tra

come

---

*The Epistle*

---

come to judge it selfe, then  
it will doe my Charity  
to cleare it. Nor is this pu  
rity of yours froward and  
formall, but gentle, free  
and communicative. You  
shew the world that there  
is a christian freedome, o  
which we may lawfully  
partake. By your faire  
Demeanour you cleerly  
demonstrate, that sancti  
ty may be without Au  
sterity, and vertue se  
curely



---

*Dedictory.*

---

curely sociable, and that  
shee is more fruitfull in  
society, than in solitude.  
This testimony, Ma-  
dame, Truth, and the  
people (whose Register  
I am) commanded mee  
to give You, and com-  
mend to Posterity. I  
cannot descend to such  
baseness, as to flatter  
you, yet (if I should,)  
would not you be flat-  
ter'd, who are like a  
sweet

---

*The Epistle*

---

sweet Instrument, that  
sends forth a delightfull  
sound without being sen-  
sible of its owne Harmo-  
ny. No, no, heaven for-  
bid my lines should bee  
like those Sacrifices, out  
of which they used to  
plucke the heart, but leave  
the tongue behinde. I se-  
riously protest, that if you  
were Emperresse of the  
World, and were with  
all as eminent in Vice, as  
you

---

*Dedictory.*

---

at you are in Vertue, I  
ull would not give you the  
n- least praise in exchange  
o- for all your large posses-  
or- sions; for no gold shall e-  
ee ver winne mee to guild  
out sinne. And I freely con-  
to fesse that if within the  
ve large circuit of my Con-  
se- versation, or Reading, I  
ou could have found a femi-  
the nine Example, fairer then  
th- your owne, to her peru-  
, as fall, if living, I had com-  
ou mended

---

*The Epistle*

---

*Plinius  
secundus  
in Epist.*

mended this Treatise, if  
dead, had bequeath'd it  
to her memory. Such a  
prostituted Eloquence, as  
made Apologies for *Mes-  
salina*, and *Quartilla*, are  
to me odious. But we  
must warily distinguish  
betweene a grosse Flatter-  
ry, and a due Praise; the  
latter of which, saith *Plin-  
ny*, no man contemneth  
till hee hath left to doo  
things praiseworthy. As an

we

---

*Dedicatory*

---

if we cannot over-worship  
if the true Deity, so wee  
cannot over-praise a true  
as Piety. It onely now re-  
flecteth, that I offer up to  
are your Ladiship, two Pe-  
titions; the first of which  
is, that you would vouch-  
safe to permit this Booke,  
the under your gracious Pa-  
tronage, to doe that  
where you are not, which  
you performe where you  
are; that is, to confirme  
we b the

---

*The Epistle*

---

the good, and convert the bad. The next is, that your Ladiship would be pleased to accept of my submissive Gratitude which, though great, can be no way proportionable to the infinity of your favours. These I would endeavour here to sum up, were I not deterred from the attempt by Impossibility, and your noblest Nature, to which  
no

---

*Dedicatory.*

---

nothing is more displeasing, than thanks for an old Benefit, nothing more pleasing, than the conferring of a new. I choose therefore rather to be argued of Ingratitude, than of offending your Ladishippe, whose service next to that of GOD, I justly glory in, it being the  
b 2 onely

---

*The Epistle, &c.*

---

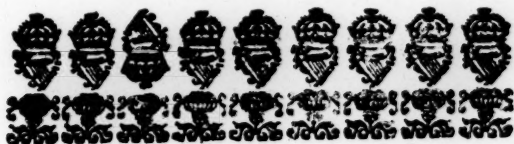
onely Honour now  
left,

*Your Ladiships most humble,*

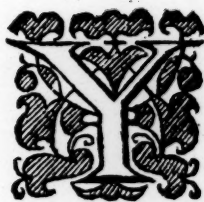
*loyall Servant,*

ANTH. STAFFORD.





To the Feminine  
READER.



*You are here presented by an extreme Honourer of your sexe, with a Mirror of Femall perfection. It is not a Glasse wherein a Babe, a Foole, or a Monster may see it selfe, as well as you. By this you cannot curle your haires, fill up your wrinckles, and so alter your*  
*b 3 looks,*

---

looks, that Nature who made you, knowes you no more, but utterly forgets her owne Workmanship. By this you cannot lay spots on your faces, but take them out of your soules, you may. By this you cannot compose your Countenances, but your Mindes you shall, and give them a never fading Beauty. In this you may discerne all Vertues, and all Graces at their full growth Here you may discover Charity distributing, Temperancy abstaining, Patience suffering, Humanity yeelding, Chastity resisting, Valour combating, and Prudency assi-



the faire tree, whose lovely fruit  
once tasted, expels not for a time  
onely, but for ever the venome  
of the most deadly finnes. This is  
she, who was on Earth a Confir-  
mer of the good, and a reformer  
of the reprobate. All her Vifitants  
were but so many Converts,  
whose bad affections, and erroni-  
ous opinions, the sweetnesse of  
her discourse had rectified. The  
Leprosie of sinne was her daily  
cure, and they (whom vice had  
blinded) were by her restored to  
their inward sight, and their pro-  
strate soules adored divine, Ma-  
jesticali vertue, residing in this  
sa.

uit sacred Temple. The conference  
me with her rais'd them above them-  
me selves, and enfranchis'd their  
is soules till then, chained to their  
r- bodies. The knowledge of her,  
er humbled the most proud natures,  
ts for the lustre of her Merits, ren-  
s, der'd their owne obscure. O make  
i- the emulation of this chaste Tur-  
of tle your onely study! and not in  
be words onely, but in deeds also  
ly shew your selves Proficients; for  
d Vertues meditated, and not a-  
o cted, do but pusse us up the more,  
- wee easily beleev'ing, that wee are  
- what we resolve to be. On this,  
is ground your beliefe, that shee a-  
mongst

---

amongst you who shall constant  
tread in her paths, shall at length  
arrive at the Celestiall Paradise  
which now she inhabits, and shall  
receive this salutation, not from  
an Angell, but from God him  
selfe; Welcome thou faire  
soule, full of Grace, enter into  
the Glory, I have prepared for  
thee.

To



# To the Masculine READER.



Or to you also  
(though of a different sexe) this  
booke belongs,  
to whom the sacred subject of  
it brought the same eternall  
benefit, shee did to her owne  
kinde. Neither doth she on-  
ly require your Gratitude, but  
your Imitation, whose mea-  
nest perfection farre excels all  
your

your so long wanted masculine  
merits. I doubt not but by this  
more, and lesse knowing of  
you, I shall be diversly judg  
ed. The first will argue mee of  
indiscretion in that I chose  
a Matter of a higher nature  
whereby to make a demon  
stration of my sufficiency. To  
these I shape this answer, that  
my Invention could not soare  
higher, for whether wee re  
gard her person, or her divine  
Gifts, shee is in Dignity next  
God himselfe. There is no  
thing of so sublime a straine as  
Vertue, which enters Hea  
ven,



linven, when Subtility and Cu-  
y thriosity are justly excluded. It  
g ois vertue must save us; for in  
idg knowledge the Divell him-  
e o selfe farre exceeds us. There is  
no no Argument, as I take it, so  
ure important, or concernes us so  
on much as that of our salvation.  
T These men would have mee  
nat busie my selfe in the Physicks,  
ure to finde out of what, not  
e wherefore I am made: Or in  
ne the Mathematickes, to learne  
at how farre it is to Heaven, not  
o. how to comethither: Or in  
s Divinity, to bee inquisitive  
whether or no Christs mira-  
culous

culous feeding of so many, w  
by augmentation, or mult  
plication of the Loaves an  
Fishes: Whether or no the  
who were born with sight,  
afterwards lost it, being resto  
red to it againe by Christ, sa  
better after the Cure, tha  
they did before their blind  
nesse; And whether or no th  
Dead, who rose with our Sa  
viour, ascended with him, o  
were againe reduct to dust  
To these needlesse accute fol  
lies I aspire not. How many  
are there now in Hell, wh  
while they liv'd here, wen  
esteem'd

y, w esteem'd: the Organs of the  
mult Sciences, the Temples of  
an VVifedome, nay Oracles, as  
the if they had beene form'd in  
ht, Heaven, and lent downe hi-  
este ther full fraught with Gods  
sa owne secrets, yet now detest  
tha their former vaine Know-  
nd ledge, as much as the Darke-  
th nesse they lived in? But in this  
Sa kingdome of Woe and Hor-  
o rour, none of vertues subiects  
uff ever resided. Let them there-  
fol fore censure on, they shall not  
an so much as shake my security;  
he for I know it fares with uni-  
er versall Learning, as with the

Vni-

---

Vniverse, wherein there are  
more Delinquents then Iudges.  
The opinions of these  
can well tollerate, because they  
proceed from Science, though  
erronious. But there are some  
whom I have heard to passe  
their casting verdicts on the  
most meriting Authors, who  
deserve themselves to be  
hang'd for so often violating  
their owne mother tongue,  
did not their ignorance pleade  
their pardon. Let these poore  
wretched things, who what  
they heare in the last compa-  
ny, vent for their owne in the  
next,

---

an next, share amongst them my  
dg scorne, and pittie, as being far  
se below my anger. I am not ig-  
he norant that he who feares the  
ugh pale meager Family of the  
ome Zoili, must onely write to his  
asse owne *Lar*. If to the truely ver-  
the tuous, the truely understand-  
who ding, I can approve these my  
bee humble indeavours, and draw  
ing any one soule, but one degree  
ue, nearer to goodnesse, my holy  
ade ambition, and my no small la-  
ore bour shall receive an ample  
hat satisfaction.

pa- It now remaines that as to  
the these latter, I seeke to approve  
xt, c all

---

all my actions, so to them  
likewise essay to iustifie this  
present worke. I am the first  
(to my knowledge) who hath  
written in our vulgar tongue  
on this our blessed Virgin  
drawne thereto I confesse by  
the strength rather of affecti-  
on, than of ability. Yet with  
all I professe that I am her ad-  
mirer, not her Idolater, and  
that I no way allow of that  
profane custome, who robb  
God of his Honour, and be-  
stow it on her. But this I wil  
say, that though I impure not  
the late troubles and affliction

of the Protestant party in Ger-  
many, to the small reverence  
there paid her (many of Gods  
iudgements according to  
Saint *Austin*, being secret, none  
unjust) yet truly I beleewe  
that the undervaluing of one  
so great, and deere in Christs  
esteeme, cannot but bee dis-  
pleasing to him, and that the  
more we ascribe to her (set-  
ting Invocation apart) the  
more gracious we appeare in  
his sight. I have beene as cau-  
tious in the penning of this  
Treatise, as possibly I could,  
and (in imitation) of Vertues

---

owne selfe) have kept the  
meane. But all pretenders to  
Divinity know, that without  
the helpe of Ecclesiasticall Hi-  
story, we can speake little of  
her life, or death, so sparing is  
the holy Writ in the mention  
of her. The scholasticall and  
Ecclesiastical Writers inserted  
in this Booke to trust, or di-  
strust too much, is alike erroni-  
ous, and therefore I referre all  
to the discretiō of the Reader.  
I will onely adde this; that  
since the finishing of this sto-  
ry, I have read a booke of the  
now Bishop of *Chichester*, en-  
tituled



---

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e

tituled *Apparatus*, &c. and  
am glad to finde that I have  
not digressed from him in any  
one particular. I conclude  
with this protestation, that if  
I have swerved in any the least  
point from the tenents recei-  
ved in the English Church, I  
shall bee most ready to ac-  
knowledge my selfe a true Pe-  
nitent. Farewell.



Meditationes poeticae &  
Christianæ in annunciatio-  
nem beatæ Virginis,  
W. A.

Ave Maria,

**G**Avisa es quondam, perque om-  
nia secula gaude,  
Omnia quæ gaudi secula tempus  
habet.  
Stipasti quæ letitia castum alvear  
atui.  
Æquum est letitiæ mella ut in aure  
bibas.

Tu

*Tu gaudi verbum peperisti, & dicit*

*Avete*

*Omnibus: atque omnis terra re-  
vibrat Ave.*

*Sed tu salvificum genuisti in secula*

*Salve:*

*Nostra eccho nudum nomen hono-  
ris, Ave.*

*Gratia plena.*

*Quam sunt plena suo distenta alvea-  
ria melle,*

*Quod floxe evario Chymica stillat  
apis:*

*Quam plena est adamante suo, teres  
area gemma,*

*Quæ quod non recipit, prensat amo-  
re decus:*

*Quam plena est radijs solaribus aurea  
luna,*

*Oppositum toto cum bibit orbe jubar:*

*Quam plena est Charitum, Charitum* Mor  
*modulata chorea,*

*Tam plena est decoris virgo Maria* F a  
*Dei.* Sic

*Invide quid fontem crispas ? mirabi-*  
*le non est* F

*Si gravida est Charitum, qua gra-* Fon  
*vidata Deo est.* N

*Dominus tecum.* Na

*Humani lapsum generis sub tristibus*  
*umbris*

*Luxerat Angelici curia tota chori,* E  
*Et reparari iterum coniuncti numinis*  
*ansa*

*Virgineo optavit posse videre sinu.* Er  
*O homo quam sit grata salus tibi pro-*  
*pria ! quando* H

*Angelica exultat turba salute tua.*

*Benedicta tu in mulieribus.*

*Mor-*

*Morborum mors intravit longo ordine  
mundum,*

*Feminea quondam sollicitata manu.*

*Sic Charitum Vita intravit longo ag-  
mine mundum,*

*Feminea Mariæ sollicitata fide.*

*Fons nobis vitæ, vitā pariendo fuisti:*

*Nosque erimus laudis fons, benedi-  
cta tibi.*

*Nam dignum est per quam capit be-  
nedictio vitæ,*

*Ut sit præ sexu ter benedicta suo.*

*Et benedictus fructus ventris tui.*

*Eructasse bonum pleno de pectore ver-  
bum,*

*Divino sese prædicat ore pater.*

*Hoc Christus verbum est, quod de bo-  
nitatis abyssu,*

*Effudit casto virgo Maria sinu.*

*Gra-*

*Gratum est, & iustum pariter, Ben  
dictio ut ipsa  
Fusa repercusso sit benedicta sono.* Et

*Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te.* Vt

*Vt Zephiri teneris ubi sibilat halitus  
hortis,*

*Dulcis adorata depluit aura rose:  
Spiritus at flori tam molliter oscu  
libat* Pre

*Vt non virgineos explicet ore sinu  
Sic Mariam sanctus Deitatis spiritus  
afflat :* G

*Numina & castus flumina fund  
onyx.*

*Nec tamen eterni solvit tibi clausu  
pudoris :* Ca

*Statque tue implicito culmine tur  
rose.*

*Christum illibata de virgine crea  
natum;* O

*Sic illibato est cortice natus odor.* E

Ben

no. Et virtus altissimi obumbrabit tibi  
Epigramma disertum.

nte  
alit  
Vt genuit magnum pater extra tem-  
pora natum :

ose.  
osch  
Tempore sic natum virgo Maria  
brevem.

ose.  
osch  
Prodiit in mundum sibi par, substan-  
tia dispar :

ose.  
osch  
Vt sine matre Deus, sic sine patre  
puer.

ose.  
osch  
Grande puerperium Deus est : maius-  
que videtur

ose.  
osch  
Non eguisse viro, non eguisse Deâ.

ose.  
osch  
Casta fugit lucem, virgo paritura sub  
umbrâ :

ose.  
osch  
Et paritura umbram præstitit ipse  
Deus.

ose.  
osch  
O condescensus nova gratia : luminis  
Author

ose.  
osch  
Ipse creatura vertitur umbra suæ.

Vtque

E

---

*Vtque invisibilis lucis pater au-*  
*habetur.*

*Sic est visibilis virgo Maria gen-*  
*Visurus numen Moses penetravit*  
*umbram :*

*Tunc Christus numen tunc p-*  
*umbra fuit.*

*Migremus tenebra ad lucem, dum*  
*mine verso,*  
*Proque die tenebra est, pro tenebr-*  
*que dies.*

TH

Tho  
T  
Is  
A





THE GHYRLOND  
of the blessed Virgin  
M A R I E.



*Ere, are five letters in this blessed  
Which, chang'd, a five-fold (Name,  
mysterie designe,*

*The M. the Myrtle, A. the  
Almonds clame,*

*R. Rose, I. Ivy, E. sweet Eglantine.*

*These forme thy Ghyrlond. Wherof Myrtle green,  
The gladdest ground to all the numbred-five.  
Is so implexed, and laid in, between,  
As Love, bere studied to keep Grace alive.*

*The*

## The Ghyrlond of

*The second string is the sweet Almond bloome  
Ymounted high upon Selinis crest :  
As it, alone, (and onely it) had roome,  
To knit thy Crowne, and glorifie the rest.*

*The third, is from the garden call'd the Rose,  
The Eye of flowers, worthy, for his scent,  
To top the fairest Lillie, now, that grows,  
With wonder on the thorny regiment.*

*The fourth is humble Ivy, interfert,  
But lowlie laid, as on the earth asleep,  
Preserved, in her antique bed of Vert, (creep  
No faith's more firme, or flat, then, where't doe*

*But, that which summes all, is the Eglantine,  
Which, of the field is clep'd the sweetest brier,  
Inflam'd with ardor to that mystick Shine,  
In Moles bush, un-wasted in the fire.*

*Thus, Love, and Hope, and burning Charitie,  
(Divineſt graces) are ſo entermixt,  
With od'rous ſweets and ſoft humilitie,  
As if they 'ador'd the Head, wheron th' are fixt.*

---

the blessed Virgin.

---

**T H E R E V E R S E**  
on the backe side.

**T** Hese Mysteries do point to three more great,  
On the reverse of this your circling crowne,  
All, pouring their full showre of graces downe,  
The glorious Trinity in Vnion met.

Daughter, and Mother, and the Spouse of G O D,  
Alike of kin, to that most blessed Trine,  
Of Persons, yet in Union (O N E) divine.  
How are thy gifts, and graces blaz'd abroad!

Most holy, & pure Virgin, blessed Mayd, (Tower,  
Sweet Tree of Life, King Davids Strength and  
The House of gold, the Gate of heavens power,  
The Morning star, whose light our Fal hath stay'd

Great Queen of Queens, most mild, most meek, most  
Most venerable. Cause of all our joy. (wise,  
Whose chearfull look our sadnesse doth destroy,  
And art the spotlesse Mirrour to Mans eyes.

The

## The Ghyrlona of, &c.

*The Seat of Sapience, the most lovely Mother,  
And most to be admired of thy Sexe,  
Who mad'st us happy all, in thy reflexe,  
By bringing forth G O D's onely Son, no other.*

*Thou Throne of glory, beauteous as the Moone,  
The rosie Morning, or the rising Sun,  
Who like a Giant hast's his course to run,  
Till he hath reach'd his two-fold point of Noone.*

*How are thy gifts and graces blaz'd abro'd,  
Through all the lines of this circumference,  
Th'imprint in all purg'd hearts this virgin sence  
Of being Daughter, Mother, Spouse of G O D!*

B.

I.



*A Pannegyricke upon  
the blessed Virgin MARY.*

**VV** Hat eye dares search the  
brightnesse of the Sun ?  
What Pencill draw it ? what con-  
ception  
Is cleane enough thy purenesse to  
descry,  
**I.** Or strong enough to speake thy  
Dignity  
Blest Mother of our Lord, whose  
happy state,  
None but an Angels tongue did  
first relate ?  
**A** Thou wert on earth a starre most  
heavenly bright,  
d That

---

That didst bring forth the Sunne  
that lent thee light.  
An earthly vessell full of heavenly  
grace,  
That broughtst forth life to *Adam*'s  
dying race :  
For God on earth thou wert  
royall throne,  
The quarry to cut out our corne  
stone,  
The chosen cloth to make his  
mortall weed,  
Soile blest with fruit, yet free from  
mortall seed.  
In marriage bands thou ledst  
Virgin life,  
And though untouch'd, becam'  
a fruitfull wife.  
Though thou to aged *Ioseph* wast  
assur'd,  
No carnall love that sacred leagu  
procur'd,

---

All vaine delights were farre from  
your assent,  
For chast by vow you seal'd your  
chaſt intent.

Thus God his Paradise to *Ioseph*  
lent,

Wherein to plant the Tree of life  
he meant,

To raise a birth miraculous, and  
by

His sacred wayes of power dis-  
close that high

And holy Myſtery, which Angels  
(though

So full of light) deſir'd to peepe  
into.

When thou thy Maker didſt bring  
forth, and he

Whoſe age had beene from all e-  
ternity,

Was borne an Infant from thy  
blessed wombe.

---

He lay enclosed in that narrow  
roome,  
Whose greatnesse heaven & earth  
could not containe.  
Who made the world, and nature  
did ordaine,  
Was made of thy flesh; he, whose  
open'd hand  
Feeds all the Creatures both by  
sea and land;  
That even to thee thy life and be-  
ing lent,  
Did from thy breast receive his  
nourishment.  
His birth no humane tongues were  
fit to sing.  
Th' Angellike Quire did greet  
their new-borne King,  
So bright a consort, and so sweet  
a lay  
Made night more faire and cheer-  
full than the day,

And



And little *Betlem* with more glo-  
ry fill'd,  
Than all the Roman Pallaces  
could yeeld.  
How wondrous great is then thy  
happinesse  
That wert his Mother? but who  
can expresse  
So high a blisse? when we desire  
to fame  
Some other Maid or vertuous wo-  
mans name,  
When we of other Ladies write  
the lives,  
Of chaste Maides, happy Mothers,  
constant Wives,  
Such as best Writers have re-  
nown'd of yore,  
When we have told their noble  
vertues o're,  
We draw examples, and besides  
their owne

---

Faire stories, praise them by com-  
parison.

But in thy life we cannot; thou  
alone

Canst not at al admit comparison,  
So far thy happy name and ho-  
nour lives,

Above all other Mothers, Maids,  
or Wives,

That 'twere a sinne, when we thy  
story tell,

So much as once to thinke of Pa-  
ralell.

Wee'l let thee in thine owne pure  
titles live,

And speake no praise of thee but  
positive,

As when we say all ages, nations  
all

Shall thee most happy among  
women call,

That

om. That of the greatest blessing God  
ere sent  
hou To sinfull man, thou wert the in-  
strument.

*T. M.*

d 4

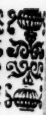
A



*A Panegyricke on the  
blessed Virgin MARY.*

**I** Doe not tremble, when I write  
A Mistresse praise, but with delight  
Can dive for Pearles into the flood,  
Fly through every Garden, wood,  
Stealing the choice of flowrs, & winde,  
To dresse her body or her minde,  
Nay the Saints and Angels are  
Not safe in Heaven, till she be faire,  
And rich as they, nor will this doe  
Vntill she be my Idoll too :  
With this sacriledge I dispence,  
No fright is in my Conscience,  
My hand starts not, nor do I then  
Finde any quakings in my pen;  
Whose every drop of Inke within,

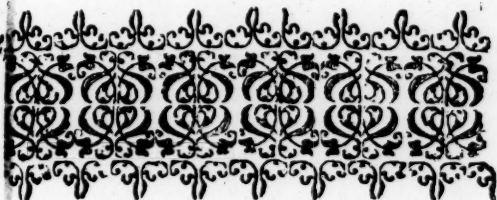
Dwells

 Dwels as in me, my Parents sinne,  
And prayses on the Paper wrot,  
Have but conspir'd to make a blot,  
Why should such fears invade me now,  
That writes on her? to whom doe bow  
The soules of all the iust, whose place  
Is next to Gods, and in his face  
All creatures and delights doth see  
As darling of the Trinitie;  
To whom the Hierarchy doth throng,  
And for whom Heaven is all one song.  
Ioyes should possesse my spirit here,  
But pious ioyes are mixt with feare.  
Put off thy shooe, 'tis holy ground,  
For here the flaming Bush is found,  
The misticke Rose, the Iv'ry Tower,  
The morning Star, & Davids bower,  
The Rod of Moses, and of Iesse,  
The fountaine sealed, Gideons fleece,  
A woman cloathed with the Sunne,  
The beauteous Throne of Solomon,  
The Garden shut, the living spring,  
The

The Tabernacle of the King,  
The Altar breathing sacred fume,  
The Heaven distilling honie-combe  
The untouch'd Lilly, full of dew,  
A Mother, yet a Virgin true,  
Before, and after she brought forth  
(Our ransome of Eternall worth)  
Both God & man, what voice can sing  
This mystery, or Cherubs wing  
Lend from his golden stocke, a Pen  
To write, how heaven came downe  
(m gl

Here feare, and wonder so advance  
My soule, it must obey a Trance.

ne,  
mbe  
,  
th  
)  
n si  
Pen  
one  
(ma  
ace



*A Panegyricke dedica-  
ed to the eternall Memory, and  
glorious Fame of the blessed  
Virgin MARY.*

**L** End me *Elias* Chariot to  
inspire  
My feeble Muse. Wheelles  
of celestiall fire  
Beare her from Earth, purge ev'ry  
looser thought  
This duller ayre, or that grosse  
Dunghill wrought.

Let

Let all her straines be pure, close  
her in white,  
And innocent wit; let her cha  
foule delight  
In no adulterate line, no want  
sense,  
Let all her knowledge be her l  
nocence  
As *Adams* ere he fell; then w  
she raise  
A maiden spirit to chant a V  
gins praise.  
Yet let her not be barren, b  
bring forth  
Zeale to each eare she strikes,  
shall her worth  
Shine like the Saint she sings o  
wonders doe,  
And be as she a Maide, and M  
ther too.  
Instruct me you nine Orders ho  
to sing,



clo  
cha  
vant  
ner  
h w  
a V  
Or let a Cherubin pluck me from  
his wing,  
A quill to write the story, or en-  
treat  
Your brother *Gabriel* from his  
blessed seate  
To visit Earth, and teach mee,  
lest I misse  
To salute MARY in a voyce like  
his.

Sleepe on your eyes faire Virgins  
long hath staid,  
Rise, and to *Bethlem* run to see a  
Maide.  
Rise Matrons, in your armes your  
infants beare,  
To *Bethlem* haste, and see Gods  
Mother there.  
Matrons, and Virgins runne, haste  
all to see,

Both

Both joyn'd in one a fruit  
Chastity.

Then every Matron this  
wonder tell,

And every Virgin chant a C  
ticle,

Sing blessed *Mary's* praise,  
that for her

*Iehovah* rivall'd with a Carpe  
ter.

\*Austin,  
Baroni-  
us, and  
others,  
hold that  
she was  
descen-  
ded from  
the Tribe  
of Levi,  
which the  
late Bi-  
shop of  
Chiche-  
ster  
opposeth.

*Mary* deriv'd from two most  
rious Springs

The bloud of *Levies* Priests, and  
*Iudah's* Kings,

Which did as in a Type for  
shew her story, \*

To be the Mother both of Gra  
and Glory.

Sing of her birth, how not  
deem'd with prize,

Her Father payd her as a sac  
fice

frui Dueto his God, when others ran-  
som'd be  
s gr With Shekles, as it were a fla-  
very  
a C To serve their Maker, and the Pa-  
rents feare  
e, f To trust him with the wardshippe  
of their heire.  
arpe But the blest Maide, whom An-  
gels now admire,  
t g (Glad they have got her to en-  
crease their Quire)  
s, a In child-hood first her Virgin  
taske begun,  
fo And in the Temple pray'd a pret-  
ty Nun;  
Gr That the first breath she suckt was  
holy aire,  
t r And the first word she learn'd to  
lispe, was pray'r.  
fac There might you see an Infant  
Saint out-vie

The

The Levites in Devotion, and a  
eye  
Cast up to heaven ere it the earth  
had knowne;  
Whole showers of teares in pious  
sorrow showne  
For *Eves* offence, not hers, she  
did begin  
To learne Repentance ere she  
knew to sinne.  
Each morning strove the earth  
Larke, and the  
Who first should chant their fa-  
cred melody.  
He that had seene her might by  
very fence  
Have prophecied an Age of Inno-  
cence  
Reborne with her. I should have  
thought her one  
Of the great Cherubins sent from  
its throne

To breed a race of Angels, and  
supply

Their roome that fell by proud  
Apostasie.

Thus she grew up in zeale, and  
holy feares,

Yet still Devotion would out-bid  
her yeares,

Till \* at fifteen (when others ho-  
lier fires

Grow to more wanton, and un-  
chaste desires)

The Priests bethought a husband  
for her bed;

But *Mary's* thoughts all unto Hea-  
ven were fled.

Yet was she *Iosephs* Spouse, not  
with th'intent

T'unloose her Uirgin Zone, but  
to prevent

The futes of others, and enjoy  
more free

*\* The o-  
pinion of  
Mantu-  
an, how  
true I  
know  
not.*

---

The treasure of unspotted Cha-  
stity.

Who will beleeve the wonder  
have said?

*Mary* a husband tooke, to live  
Maide.

Dare not thou *Ioseph* to approach  
too neare

This heavenly Arke, thy God in  
habits there.

Touch not that sanctifi'd, and ha-  
low'd wombe,

Whence thy salvation, and the  
worlds must come:

For 'tis not, Carpenter, thy Art  
that can

Repare the Fabricke of selfe-ma-  
in'd man:

*Mary* must Bride to thy Creator  
be,

And clad in flesh part of the Tri-  
nity.

See God hath sent from his eternall sphere,  
Blest *Gabriel*, his fire-wing'd Messenger,  
Who crown'd with Glory, and a wreath of Light,  
Salutes the Virgin, doubtfull of the sight,  
And courts her thus. Haile *Mary* full of grace,  
(Wherewith a blush rose in her bashfull face,  
And verifi'd his words) the Lord, quoth he,  
Hath left his Heaven, and comes to dwell in thee;  
Blest amongst women, in thy sexe divine;  
For ev'ry brest salvation sucks from thine.  
Suppose a King had some gay favorite sent

---

With powerfull Rhetoricke, and  
Court complement  
To win a Country Girle. What  
could she guesse  
But 'twas some scorne on her un-  
worthinesse ?  
So *Mary* ignorant what her Ver-  
tue was,  
(For she had made Humility her  
glasse)  
Doubts what the words should  
meane, wonders to heare  
This salutation, and mistrusts her  
eare.  
And when the Angell tels her of  
a Sonne,  
To sit on Princely *Dauids* royall  
Throne,  
To rule the house of *Iacob*, and to  
be  
A sceptred Prince to all Eterni-  
ty,

Her



Her modest soule no vaine Ambition  
sway'd,  
She rather chose to live an humble  
Maid,  
Then a Queene Mother. How can  
I, quoth she,  
Who nere knew man, and am a  
Votary  
Nere to know any, teeme with  
such a birth,  
Who would not for the treasure  
of the earth  
Be false unto my vowes? My love  
is pray'r,  
And piety all the sonnes I meane  
to beare.  
But when the Angell did Gods  
will relate,  
That he would get a sonne that  
might create,  
She yeelds a Handmaid to her  
Lords desire.

O I but thinke how such strange  
newes would fire  
Some Ladies hearts with pride,  
when they should heare  
Gods growne enamour'd on their  
beauties were !  
How they would thinke them-  
selves worthy the bed  
Of their Creatour, and advance  
their head  
Above Mortality, promising their  
eyes  
To be made Stars to glorifie the  
skies !  
But *Mary's* zeale swell'd higher  
then her pride;  
Nothing mov'd that, not when  
old *Zachary's* Bride  
Felt the Babe dance, and leape  
within her wombe,  
For joy the Mother of his Lord  
was come,

But

ange But bless'd her God regarded her  
estate,  
ride And sung not to her selfe, *Magnificat*.  
their Nor when the Shepheards did re-  
late their story  
nem That was as full of wonder as of  
Glory,  
nce But tooke the Angels Hymne, and  
chanted then  
their Glory to God on high, good will  
to men.  
the Nor when three Kings did to her  
Cratch resort,  
her Did shee conceive her Stable  
turn'd a Court,  
hen When to a Priest, a Prophet, and  
a King,  
ape They sev'rall brought their se-  
v'rall offering.  
rd She tooke not to delight a wan-  
ton sense.

But

The pretious Myrrhe, and odorous  
Frankincense,  
Nor did with covetous greedy  
eyes behold  
The Easterne wealth (the third  
mans treasure) gold;  
Her Sonne, and Saviours honour  
to prefer,  
Was Mirrhe, was Frankincense  
was gold to her.  
Her life was all Humility, Must  
make haste  
To sing her Death, and how her  
life being past,  
Heaven entertain'd her; for their  
Hymnes divine  
Are fitter to relate her praise, than  
thine.  
Thou hast not power t'unfold  
with what a feare  
She fled to *Ægypt*, and continu'd  
there

12  
drow To save her Infants life, not skill  
to tell

ceed How much she joy'd at ev'ry Mi-  
racle.

thin Presume not thou to number  
what her eyes

non Showre forth in teares, as on the  
Crosse she spies

ense Her Sonne, and Saviour, nor what  
care she show'd,

Mus To gather up the drops of bloud  
that flow'd

y he Pure Balsome from his side; nor  
venture on

thei To write with what a violent  
zeale she run

tha To begge with *Ioseph* he a Tombe  
might have,

fol By whom we all are ransom'd  
from the Grave.

nu't Methinks I see how by his Crosse  
she stood,

T

How

How her sad eyes vide teares,  
he dropt bloud;  
Her eyes more sad, cause they  
tain'd their sight,  
And could not doe as Heaven d  
loose their light.

Her armes expresse the Cro  
whereon he dide,  
As if she too meant to be cruc  
fide.

I see her vaile rent; for it coul  
not be,

The Temple should expre  
more grieve than she.

Me thinkes I heare her plaints.

*Christ that I  
Should give thee flesh; for else thou  
could'st not dye!*

*Divinity is from all passion free,  
That thou canst suffer torments, m  
from mee.*

*Where*

Wherefore thy Virgin Mother here  
vowes all  
her houres to prayers, till thy last  
trumpet call.

And here I crave no pardon, if  
my penne  
cannabbe those presumptuous, and  
o're curious men :  
Whose bold Disputes dare into  
question call  
What sonnes she had, and whe-  
ther Christ was all.  
As if a mortall durst to *Mary*  
come,  
And court Gods widdow, to pro-  
phane her wombe,  
As if the Mother Maide that stile  
gave ore,  
To be a Mother, but a Maide no  
more,

Or

Or she that God and man ha  
borne, would be  
A Mother now to beare Hum  
nity,  
As she from heaven to earth, he  
thoughts had cast,  
And could love *Ioseph*, that ha  
God embrac'd.  
No, having layne, great heaven  
immortall King,  
Vnder the shadow of thy gratio  
wing:  
She Turtle like would a chaf  
widdow be,  
And vow'd to love no other  
Dove but thee,  
But ever mourn'd thy absence, till  
her eyes  
Had spent her soule in teares, and  
love-strain'd cries,  
Crackt her poore heart-strings  
Having cast away

The



ha The toyleſome burthen of unwel-  
dy clay,  
uma With pure, and ayrie pinions,  
hence ſhe flies,  
, he And forſakes earth, to ſeek thee  
in the ſkyes.  
t ha When ſhe arriv'd where her bleſt  
Mate doth dwell :  
ven What Poets, Priests, or Prophets  
rage can tell  
cio The entertainements, welcomes,  
joyes have beene,  
na Unleſſe in *Pathmos* he had Viſions  
ſeene.  
the We may ſuppoſe that Angels  
clapt their wings,  
e, ti Powers and Dominions ſhowted,  
all the ſtrings  
an Of Seraphins tun'd high, lowd  
Hymnes did play.  
ng A troope of Virgins on the *Mil-*  
*ky way*

Met

Met her in snow-white robes, and  
Convoy had  
Legions of Martyrs, all in scarlet  
clad.  
*Iosuah* with Captaines, *Darius*  
fainted Kings,  
All tendred their respects. The  
Pallace rings  
With acclamations, *Eve* runne  
forth to see  
Whence sprung the fruit, cur'd  
the forbidden tree.  
*Sarah* makes haste, her Ladies  
wombe to blesse,  
Without whose birth, the curse  
of barrennesse  
Had laine upon her, though she  
had a sonne,  
And had brought twenty *Isaacs*  
forth for one.  
*Rebecca* with the better of her  
twins,

And

---

And *Rachel* with her *Ioseph* too be-  
gins  
To chant her praise. The brave  
Bethulian Dame,  
Victorious *Judith*, to her welcome  
came  
With troopes of Amazons. The  
Sheban Queene,  
(Who now the new *Ierusalem* had  
seene)  
Runs to the sight, and wistly ga-  
zeth on  
The Mother of the mightier *Solo-  
mon*.  
There met with Saints, and An-  
gels, all desire  
To bid her welcome, thus, in a full  
Quire.

*Come*

---

Come blessed Virgin, fixe thine  
eyes upon

This glorious Throne,  
And on the right hand, there  
behold thy Sonne.

Behold his bands, his feet, his  
pierced side,

That for us did,  
Whose very wounds in heaven  
are Deifide.

Those glorious lips, which once  
drew milke from thee,

Shall one day be  
The doome of soules, to blisse, or  
misery.

Blest

---

pine  
one,  
ere  
Blest wombe, the mysteries that  
sprung from bence,  
Dazle our sense,  
Whose onely Essence is Intelli-  
gence.

his  
Finite thou wert, yet infinite in  
thee

de,  
oen  
Wee'treasur'd see,  
Mortall, yet Mother to Eter-  
nity.

nce  
Thy Sonne made of thee, made  
thee. Faith aspire

be  
or  
One ladder higher,  
Elder then's Mother, antient as  
his Sire.

A

'Tis

---

'Tis strange thou should'st both  
Maide and Mother be;

Stranger to see  
In one soule both God, and Hu-  
manity.

As hee was God, thou still art  
Mayd. Who can

This wonder scan?  
Hee made thee Mother, as hee  
was but man.

Thou suckl'st him upon thy  
breasts, and he

To ransom thee,  
Open'd his side upon his pass-  
ion tree.

Come

me blessed Virgin, and receive  
thy Crowne

Of full Renowne,  
Where Death, and Time have  
laid their Scepters downe.

There sing with us, how three doe  
sit upon

The glorious Throne;  
One of which three is two, yet  
all but one.

A 2

Thus,

Thus, holy Virgin, have I shad-  
dow'd o're  
Thy Picture in a rude unpollish-  
score,  
That wish'd t'have limm'd it with  
as lively grace,  
As ever Painter drew the sweetest  
face.  
Yet would I not idolatrize thy  
worth,  
Like some, whose superstition sets  
thee forth  
In costly ornaments, in cloaths so  
gay,  
So rich as never in the Stable  
lay.  
These make thy Statues now as  
famous be  
For pride, as thou wert for Hu-  
mility.  
I cannot thinke thy Virgin bash-  
fulnesse

Would



---

Would weare the Lady of *Lo-*  
*rettos* dresse,  
Though farre more glorious  
robes to thee were given,  
Meekeneſſe, and Zeale on Earth,  
Glory in Heauen.

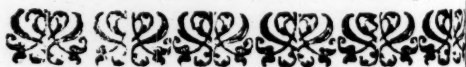
Take then the honour thou haſt  
juſtly wonne,  
Praiſe above Angels, but be-  
low thy Sonne.

THE



Faults escaped in Printing.

**P**Age 74. line 4. *reade, glorions.* 101  
in the margin, *reade, not onely man*  
*Moderne.* 128. 14. *for it, reade, is.* 16  
16. *for penurious, reade, poore.* 182. 1  
*Lambertus.* 194. 14. *in stead of, f*  
*reade, from.* 205. 6. *7 delphonus.* 213. 1  
*for consent, reade, concent.* 246. *f*  
*Christs, r. Christ.* 247. *for brought,*  
*broughtst.* 248. 11. *for silent, r. a silen*  
248. 13. *dele, but.*





g.

101

man

16

2.1

f, f

3.1

.

br,

file





This Blessed Virgin had the grace deuine,  
To be deriud from IESSE's blooming rod.  
And riſe elect from DAVID's golden line  
To be the Daughter, Mother, Spoule of GOD



THE  
FEMALL  
GLORY:

OR,

The life of the Virgin  
MARY.



History offers to our  
view, Myriads of  
holy Virgins in  
Beauty, and vertue  
equally attractive,  
whose due praise  
the Catholike Church doth at this  
day solemnely sing, but with a  
B more

*Her ex-  
ternall  
Beauty.*

*Galati-  
nus.*

more elevated voyce (as duty on our part, and merit on hers commands) the laud of that most excellent Princeſſe, the Virgin Mother of God. There be who affirme that what ever the Creator ſaw beautifull in heaven, or earth, he beſtowed in the limming of this rare Piece, not that ſhe might be ſtiled the moſt faire amongſt the daughters of women, but by a heavenly prerogative, the alone Faire, the alone Lovely. Look how many parts, ſo many arts you might diſcerne of the Celeſtiall Limmer. And this is no way repugnant to reaſon it ſelfe; for if Chriſt was faire above the ſonnes of men, ſhould not ſhe be ſo above their Daughters, ſince from her alone he received his fleſh? *Gregory Nazianzen* proclaimes that ſhe ſurpaſs'd all women in lovelineſſe.

ness. *Andreas* sayes that she was a Statue carved by Gods own hand. Others of those first, and purer times not without admiration, observe that God was almost fifty Ages in the meditation of the structure of this stately Pallace. And truely our beliefe may easily digest this, that his omnipotency would make her fit to be the Mother of his Son, Empreſſe of this lower world, and the blessed Conduit through which should passe the mystery of mans Redemption. Yet finde I a ridiculous description of her in *Epiphanius* a Priest of *Constantinople*, who affirms that her Face was of the colour of Wheate, her visage long, and her nose sutable, her haire yellow, and her eye-browes blacke. But what authority he hath for this, neither I, nor I thinke he himselfe can

well tell; for surely simple Antiquity was not either curious, or skilfull to deliver it by tradition, or picture to posterity. I verily beleeve he had it from his owne dreames, or rather fancy. *Mopsa* is as much beholding to our incomparable, and inimitable *Sydney* for a delineation, as is my divine subject to this curious Imperinent. Whether, her beauty chiefly consisted in colour, in Symmetry of parts, or both I know not: sure I am the streame of other more judicious, pious Authors carries me not into an opinion, but a strong beleefe of her heavenly forme. Cardinall *Cajetan*, and *Galatinus*, (with what truth I cannot say) certainly with more probability then he, maintaine that her excellent temperature, her conformity of members,  
her



her firme and constant Complexi-  
on free'd her from all contagion  
and diseases. And *Dyonisius* goes  
further, affirming that she was no  
other then a walking Spring. Such  
variety of sweet odours her very  
pores breath'd out on all that  
came neare her; as we reade of *A-*  
*lexanders* living body, and the *Æ-*  
*gyptian* Carkasses which by a  
thin spare dyet observed in life,  
even after death sent forth a most  
sweet perfume. *Sylvannus Razzius*  
recounts a pleasing story of a cer-  
taine Clerke, who by many pray-  
ers implor'd, and obtain'd the  
blessing of her sight, but with this  
condition, that he should see her  
but with one eye, and that one he  
should lose. He willingly embrac't  
it, but when she appear'd drest in  
all her Beames, not being able  
with one eye to take a full view

of her, he opened the other also, chusing rather to forfeit his sight for ever, then to loose one minute of the inconceivable content he enjoyed in the sight of so glorious a spectacle. Were this true, it would make a brave example of a devout soule ravisht with the view of a divine object.

*Her in-  
ternall  
Beauty.*

If the Inne was so splendent, so sumptuous, what may we thinke of the amiable guest, that lodg'd in it, her minde, beset with thoughts cleare, and radiant as her owne eyes? He that dares attempt the expression of these her internall gifts is ignorant of her sublimity; he who dares not, knows not her humanity, her sweetnesse. As no stile can ascend so high as her exalted worth, so on the other side none can descend so low as her  
Humility.

Humility. Encourag'd therefore by her meeknesse, not my owne sufficiency, I shall endeavour to limme her soule in little (since in great neither my time, nor ability will let me) which will appeare an enterprize as hardy, and vaine as his who should strive to limmit the light, or circumscribe the Ayre. Know then, modest Reader (and receive this knowledge with the same extasie, and zeale I write it) that her internall luster was farre greater then her externall, like in this unto the Tents of Kedar, as soone cover'd with dust, and almost burned up with the heat of the Sunne, as soone beaten, and shaken with tempestuous weather, but in the meane time inwardly all glittering with glory, and magnificence. O ye Angels, to you it is onely given, not to sinne, but on

her is conferr'd what you cannot merit, to beare, ~~and~~ the reparation of mans ruine. The Apostles, those holy Tapours of the primitive Church sometimes burnt dimme, and were obscur'd with the fogge of sinne, but her brightnesse nothing vitious could lessen, much lesse utterly extinguish. She was, indeed, vertues prime, and great example, and all the accomplished women of the Ages past, present, or to come have grace, and happinesse to the full in being called her imperfect Coppies.

Here my Invention treads a Maze, and my heart is divided betweene an earnest desire to praise her to the height, and a holy feare lest in that praise I should trench on Gods own peculiar Attributes. That she was no way inferiour to  
her

her Sonne, according to the flesh,  
I dare not with some avouch, who  
magnifie her in a phrase that vio-  
lates her modesty, and makes her  
blush at her owne exaltation. Her  
lowlineffe was such that it was  
nearer the rejecting of all com-  
mendations then entertaining a  
comparison betweene her selfe,  
and him to whom she had profes-  
sed her selfe an hand-maid. And  
no lesse is her shame, or rather, in-  
deed, her trembling when penne-  
s prophanely prodigall ascribe that  
honour to her which is onely pro-  
per, and due to that Deity from  
which she received her grace, and  
being. I will not, with *Lipsius* as-  
cribe as much to her Milke, as to  
her Sonnes Bloud. Neither dare I  
side with those who averre that  
she is halfe of that sacrifice that  
ransom'd us, and Gods partner  
here.

here. Nor is my penne so impious-  
ly valiant as to justifie that God  
made himselfe the patterne, and  
communicated to her by Grace  
whatsoever hee had by Nature.  
Nor am I of his bold opinion who  
sayes, If man had never sinned, yet  
Christ should have taken flesh to  
honour her. These men would  
have her in all things equall to  
Christ himselfe. Neither her mer-  
deasy, nor mine will admit of this  
blasphemous flatterie. I willingly  
allow her to be the vessell, but not  
the fountaine of Grace. I am much  
taken with his Tenent who holdeth  
that God made all things for the  
use of Man, because he would an-  
ply furnish him with matter en-  
ough to busie his head, lest he  
should bee so audacious as to en-  
quire into his secrets, & encroache  
upon his prerogatives. We need

not (thanks to his infinite goodnesse) bee so dangerously venturous, since he affords us a large scope, and ground enough safely to extol this his Favourite, second to none that ever bore flesh, either in her owne desert, or his esteeme.

To begin with her birth; it was miraculous, as it alwayes falls out where Nature failes, and God supplies, as he did here in *Anna* the blessed mother of this more blessed maid. And here by the way I must insert an observation derived from Gods sacred Word, that for the most part the children of sterility are fruit-

*Her Birth.*

*That Ioacimus and Anna were her parents is an undoubted truth receiv'd by the Church, as wee find both in Baronius and Bishop Montacute in his Booke called Apparatus, &c.*

fruitfull in sanctity, and all good works. *Samson* was the sonne of a barrennesse, and kept the people in obedience. So was *Isaac*, and gave precepts to the seed of *Abraham*. So was *Samuel*, and foretold the misery of servitude to the Jewish Synagogue. So was *Ioseph*, and with his counsell govern'd all *Aegypt*. So was our hallow'd subject who brought forth the Sonne of glory. The slaves of the *Tyrus* rebelling against their Master and having subdu'd them by a generall consent, decreed, that he amongst them who the next morning could first discover the Sun rising should be their King. One of them of a more gentle disposition then the rest, having hidde his Master (by name *Strato*) from the others fury, secretly askt him to advise in this so important affaire.



who bade him look into the West;  
for there he should sooner discern  
the approach of the Sunne then  
they who sought him in the East.  
This wise counsell he obey'd, and  
while the rest fixed all their eyes  
on the East, he from the highest  
part of the City, by his Rayes in  
the West, first discover'd his as-  
cension in the East. So in *Anna* (the  
happy mother of this wonder of  
women) being then in the occi-  
dent, or set of life the prophetick  
world foresaw the brightnesse of  
the dazeling light she then teem'd  
with. At length the worlds greedy  
expectation was satisfied; and this  
Cynthia, this chaste Starre was de-  
livered of a Plannet farre greater,  
and brighter then her selfe; of  
whose all gladding shine the first  
man participated, and the last shal.  
I may as properly as dolefully call  
them

them Planets, since they never rested, but were in perpetuall motion while in this lower orbe they ran their fatall courses, in which they were often clouded, never quite eclipsed. The day of the Nativity of this most perfect of Saints, I finde thus described by *Nicolaus Vernulaus* a late Writer, and a professor of eloquence. The description I onely insert for the elegancy; for I must condemn it as guilty of Levity and Vanitie, and no way futable to the Majesty, Gravity, and Modesty of this our sacred subject. *The Sunne, saith he, this day burnisht his face, the beater to illustrate the world, and to appeare gracious in her sight, who carried in her breast a fire purer, and clearer than his owne Rayes. The earth put on her freshest greene, and the flowers spread their dainty leaves*

## *The life of the Virgin MARY.* 15

and made a sweet exchange of odours  
with her, yet hung their heads to see  
themselves both in colour, and sent so  
farre surpass'd. The trees advanc'd  
their curled heads, and compos'd their  
lookes within the Christall streames,  
who seemed to dance after their owne  
mumur. Amongst the Beasts their  
King layd by his fiercenesse, and not  
one of his subiects was found savage,  
or polluted that day. Then was the  
Proverbe cross'd; for the Worme be-  
ing trod on, would not turne againe,  
lest she should prove unlike her mee-  
kest Mistresse. In the very bowels of  
the earth, the minerals and the stones  
more pretious, assumed their quicker  
sparkes, as Emblems of her splen-  
dour. The Ocean had not a wrinkle in  
his face, thousands of Halcions ho-  
ver'd o're his head, and his Tritons  
blew so lowd, that their notes sounded  
the very bottome of the Deep. Within  
his

his vast Dominions was no discor  
 that day; for the greater of the f  
 forsooke their prey, and the small  
 swumme in that security, that t  
 sprat bearded the Dolphin, and play  
 with the nose of the overgrown Wh  
 The birds sung their cho:sest aires;  
 fowles flew nearer the earth to salu  
 her, and their Towring Lord  
 Eagle brought his young ones to  
 their eyes at this new borne Lig  
 The ayre it selfe was like her, gen  
 and being invisible, came to steal  
 kisse from her cherry lips, soft a  
 smooth as were his owne. The win  
 (conceiving their silence would be  
 please) kept themselves within the  
 dens; onely Zephirus was let loose  
 fanne the Pinke, and Violet, a  
 play the wanton with the Rose. The  
 farre Vernuleus. Of all things cre  
 ated man alone, to whom, being  
 sicke, she was to bring a soverain

Anc

Antidote was found least joyfull,  
least gratefull. Yet were there  
some, no doubt, of Gratitudes  
children, who lay prostrate before  
her, and did homage to their  
sweetest Lady, who might better  
be called the Mother of the li-  
ving, then *Eve*; since she, like a  
Murdresse, gave her children  
death ere birth; and defaced those  
Images whereon God had set his  
owne stampe. She was no wiser  
than a poor Fly, who, enamour'd  
of the beauty of the flame, longs  
to try if it be as sweet as faire, and  
is consumed with her owne folly.  
Had our blessed one supplied her  
roome in Paradiſe, the forbidden  
fruit had, perchance, beene yet un-  
tasted, and man uncursed; for she  
was altogether void of curiosity,  
proper to that weaker sexe, and

C

the

the very bane of it. Our dearest  
Princesse therefore was deserved-  
ly a Queene ere borne, receiv'd a  
Crowne sooner than sight, and  
found her Throne seated upon the  
threshold of life. And what  
Crowne was she presented with:  
Not one to compose which the  
East, and the West joyned their  
treasures, but a Crowne in the  
making whereof every vertue, and  
all the Graces had a hand. No  
did any vaine mortall place it on  
her sacred Temples, but God  
himselfe, who thought nothing  
too deare, nor omitted any or-  
nament that might embellish this  
goodly edifice wherein himselfe  
meant to reside. Having thus a-  
dorn'd and honour'd her, he  
plac'd her in this lower world for  
the good and admiration of all  
for

for the conversation of a few.  
Though borne on earth she lived  
here like a Native of Heaven.

As we may guesse at the neat-  
nesse of a house by the entry into  
it: so we may judge of her lifes re-  
mainder by the very beginning.

*Sabellius* affirmes that \* she no  
sooner saw the light, but she a-  
dor'd the Creator of it, and lifted  
up her heart and eyes to the great  
Infuser of all her incomparable  
excellencies. She lov'd God ere  
she had seene man. The defect of  
her tongue could not hinder the  
operation of her soule, in which  
ere she could speake, she acknow-  
ledg'd his unspeakeable good-  
nesse. In her Religion preceded  
the use of reason, and she appre-  
hended Gods mercies long ere

*Her in-  
fancy.*

*Sabelli-  
cus sets  
downe  
how shee  
dispos'd  
of every  
particu-  
lar hour.*

she was capable of his nature, and wiledome. Ere she could utter holy words, she made holy signs, by which she made knowne the sanctity of her heart. The first word she learn'd to lisper was *Iehovah*. She sent forth many a sigh for sinne, not having committed any, and bewailed that of which she was utterly ignorant. The rowling of the cradle put her in minde that she was newly enter'd into the tempest of this life, the infinite dangers whereof to escape she made Vertue her Pilot.

We will not here with some Writers of her Life, dispute whether or no she had the same ordinary Education with other children; nor with them affirme that she entred the Temple at three years



yeares old, and lived close by the Altar, and was fed miraculously by an Angell; as also that it was there revealed to her that she should be deliver'd of the Messias. I will not make one steppe out of Gods own path, frō which I never yet saw the greatest wit to swerve, but it was in danger of sticking fast. Yet hath a pious charity often swallowed more than all this. If from the hand of an Angell she there received food naturall, or supernaturall, sure I am the wonder is not so great as that of the Incarnation, where the wombe included the Word. And why should we with difficulty beleieve that this white spotlesse soule was illuminated with Revelations by the divine object of her chaste vows? who undoubtedly deserved to be

rapt up if it were possible, a story higher than was Saint *Paul*. It is likely enough, saith *Mantuan*, God would have the Temple of his Spirit to dwell in the Temple of his service. The same Author affirms that she there liv'd a pretty Nun, and Spunne, and wove the sacred Vestments till her eleventh or twelfth yeare, when her prudence, and shame, and the care of her Reputation, forbade her to accompany even the very Priests themselves, men whom God had selected out of the Masse of the vulgar to teach his Will, to instruct his people, and to sing his praise. These curiosities, and bold conjectures let us rather beleieve then contest with the broachers; for it is wisdom to grant what we cannot confute. Let us then imagine.

imagine that this holy Recluse confined her body to this sacred solitude, and a spare diet, and warily kept her soule from the surfeits to which carnall delights invite all things humane. And it is consonant both to reason and truth, that her exercise there, was pious like the place. They who goe about to take away her writing, and reading tongue are impiously ridiculous, since it evidently appears that she was well read in the Scriptures by her divine Hymne uttered in *Zacharies* house.

\* On her reading attended Meditation, on her Meditation Prayer, or her Prayer Action, as the lovely fruit of the precedent. Thus

\* *Ancient and eminent Authors affirm*

*her to have beene learned in the Hebrew tongue, all which you shall finde quoted in Cedrenus.*

busied, the day left her, the night found her. Her sleeping cogitations we may suppose were suitable to her waking, and her very dreames divine. She had not a thought that was her owne, all belonged to God. She was slow to speake, saith *Sabellicus*, but ready to obey all holy advice. Her tongue was not so swift as her Wit, which made it follow for direction in all the requisites of speech. In a word, she might well usurpe that of the Church, *When was a little one, I was pleasing to the most high*. When upon mature deliberation she left the Temple she still liv'd as if she had been in it. Though in body she was sojournable, she fetter'd her soule from wandring abroad, her true conversation being in heaven. This flourishing

flourishing Vine planted her selfe  
amongst the Olives. She was more  
choice of her company then of  
her food, or rayment, both which,  
God knows, were course enough.  
She knew temperancy to be Gods,  
and Natures Favorite, in that it  
conduceth to the service of the  
former, and the preservation of  
the later. She therefore made this  
heavenly vertue judge of her Ap-  
petite, lest it should long after ex-  
cesse, the mother of all unclean-  
nesse. Her soule gave laws to her  
body, which it could not infringe  
without the injunction of a strict  
pennance. She devour'd Gluttony  
it selfe, and made the flesh subject  
to the command of the spirit. Her  
fare, saith *Cedrenus*, required no  
vessell, nor need she to wash her  
hands after her greatest meale. Her  
dyet

dyet beside the fire, as of no use. From the Earths face, the Cows dugged, and the Fountains brimmed, she readily fetched her sustenance. She was as ignorant of the Persian luxury, as the superstition. To this her cloathing was correspondent, for which her backe was beholding to her fingers. Her hands were the purveyours to her other members. She had one eye fixed on heaven, and the other cast upon the earth, being intentive on the Glories of the one, and the Necessities of the other, and at once acted *Martha*, and *Magdalene*. It is very credible that she sowed, and spunne, and maintain'd life with labour. Hee who gives life to all things, suffer'd his then adopted, and since naturall mother, to gaine her living with sweat, and care, that

that her example might give pride the checke, and teach Majesty Humility. In her he made manifest that mortall felicity is not the parent of the immortall. She was not solicitous for the feather, the looking-glasse, or any outward bravery, being onely carefull to cover her shame, and at once to expell two deadly enemies to her soule, and body, pride, and cold. Her outward simplicitie was in all things answerable to her inward.

Well, now she began to write woman, and her fifteenth yeare approached, and hand in hand with the increase of time went the acquisition of all Graces. Her least perfection would render another most accomplit. In her all virtues were at strife, all overcame.

Nothing

*Her betrothing.*

Nothing was here meane, she being no other then an union of superlatives. Charity, obedience, civetie, virginity, all were in her height. Nothing in her was wanting but the Deity it selfe. Yet was not her vaine-glory such, that she desired with *Dina* to visit the daughters of other Regions, and to enlarge the renowne of the her Excellencies, being onely studious in the government of her owne little, inward commonwealth. Her fixed resolution was not onely to confine her person but her fame, which (had it penetrated forreigne Countries) Kings would have come suppliant to her cottage, and on their knees have petition'd for her love. But the bonds of her Matrimony were already askt in heaven, and no impediment



pediment found why she might  
not wedde God himfelfe. Yet at  
the earnest follicitation of the reve-  
rend Priests, faith *Mantuan*, was  
the content to be betroth'd to *Io-  
seph*; not that he should do the of-  
fice of an husband, but serve as a  
barre to the importunity of other  
Sutours, that so she might the more  
freely enjoy the inconceivable  
pleasure she tooke in her vowed  
virginity.

But



28. And the Angel came in vnto her,  
and said, Haile thou that art  
Highly fauoured the LORD is with thee,  
Blessed art thou Among women.

But now the time is come when she must be (to the astonishment of the world) a Mother, and yet remaine a Virgin. The marriage betweene God, and Nature is concluded on in heaven, and *Gabriel* the Ambassador concerning mans Redemption prepares himself for his journey decreed from all eternity. He receives instructions from the hands of Gods owne transcendent Mercy; and therefore, no doubt, but they are gentle, and pleasing. Clad in white, (as an Emblem of his innocencie) he sets forth without any other guard then his owne right Arme able to destroy Legions. The *Chaldeans* carried in their Ensignes a towring Flame, the Babilonians a Dove, the Scythians Lightning, the Persians

*The salutation.*

fians a Bow, and Arrows, the Romans an Eagle. And this extraordinarie Ambassadour of peace, (being to descend from the higher to the lower world, from the Creatour to the creature, an Angell to men) beares along with him in his very name the signe of his Power, and Fortitude that sends him. The gates, saith *Vernulaus*, of the celestiall pallace stand wide open, and the sacred Trinity gladly beholds the departure of this divine Messenger. The Angels clap their wings, and make the heavenly rooffe ring with Halleluiahs. The Saints attend, and send their vows after him, that his presence may be without terrour, and his sweet delivery win consent in the heart of their glorious Empreffe. The vaste space betweene the Poles is filled

filled with troopes of holy spirits, who give a convoy to this their fellow-servant graced above the rest, in having so important an affaire as the worlds salvation committed to his charge. The Starres put on new, and brighter aspects, as seeming to foretell what they foresee not. The Earth bedecked with all imaginable ornaments presents him with variety of scents, and colours even to her selfe new, and layes her prime dainties under his feet. Onely her stupid Inhabitants, whom his Embassie most concern'd, were altogether unsensible of his arrivall, and of the eternall benefit he brings them, receiving him rather like an Herald then an Ambassadour. And (which encreased his wonder at his entertainment) his first approach was

D unwel-

unwelcome to the Saint whose Votary he was. He found her (as some thinke) alone, separated as well in body as minde from the world. She was not ignorant that piety was nearer pollution in society than solitude, and therefore to shun infection, she avoyded company. She well knew that the holy Ghost himselfe had dwelt with the Prophets and Apostles in Caves, Dens, and Dungeons, and there pen'd the all-saving Word. That which we call good fellowship, and sweet conversation her conscience assured her to be at best but a sociable folly. In neighbourhood she feared proximity in vice. Well, if alone he found her, questionlesse she made a divine use of that privacy, and meditated how in a corruptible body,

to preserve a spirit incorruptible. The celestiall agent having demanded, and obtained audience, spake the oration he made not; for he was but Interpreter of the holy Spirit, in which office he justly gloried. The speech assuredly was modest, and futable to the sacred cares it was to enter. The beginning of it, no doubt, consisted of a reverent applause of the perfecti-  
ons God had imparted to her. *Haile Mary, said he, full of Grace, the Lord be with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, &c.* How she tooke this the Text following declares. *And when she saw him shee was troubled at his saying, and thought what manner of salutation that should be.* No doubt the Angell no sooner pronounc't, *Haile Mary full of Grace,* but a blush arose in her  
D 2                      bash-

\* *That the Angell appeared to her in the form or shape of a man is the opinion of S. Hierome. in Epist. ad Eustoch. de cust.* bashfull face, and verified his words. But this colour was not fixed, it went quickly back to fortifie her noble heart against the feare that invaded it. She saw her selfe alone with one altogether a stranger to her, whose face she neither knew, nor his intent. True it is, his language was smooth, and even, but as faire words as these, have often proceeded from a foule heart. She trembled at his salutation, thinking him to be a \* man

Virgin. and of S. Ambrose, lib. 1. offic. cap. 18. *And that which Damascen hath, lib. 2. de fide orthod.* All the learned approve of; to wit, that the Angels are transform'd, and appear to men according to the pleasure of the Lord, and reveale his divine Mysteries. And that Angels appear'd in the old Testament in the shape of men is certaine: and for many reasons it is very probable that Gabriel assumed the form of a man when he came to the blessed Virgin. Chrysostomus serm. 140, is of opinion that the Angel appeared  
subject



## *The life of the Virgin MARY.* 37

*in a shape, and habit most pleasing and gentle, and that the Virgin was not troubled at his person, but his speech, in that it is said shee marvelled what sayings those should be.*

subject to abhorred Lust, and therefore feared violence: but when she once knew him, and his Embassy, she then undaunted, discours'd with him as an Angell, whom before she quak't at as a man. I conjure all modest soules that shall peruse this passage by all things deare to them, to dwell long upon it, as worthily deserving both their admiration, and imitation. Though she received from him extreme and heavenly praises, yet she was afraid, because she was alone. O Saviour of the World! Purity feares an Angell, shall not Impurity then suspect a

man though in the shape of an Angell when his complement, and discourse are sensuall. Virginitie cannot bee too heedfull, which makes it practise the doubt of things safe, that so it may accustom it selfe to the feare of things dangerous. If heathen women have by nature so abhorred pollution, that they have chosen death before it, how odious must we judge it to the Angellicall innocency of Gods owne Mother? Well, what course tooke she? She rejected these his commendations not with her tongue, but her lookes, which put on a dislike of all he had said. She had heard that when Castles come to a parley, it is a signe of yeelding, and therefore thought it her safest way to involve her selfe within humility,  
and

and a sober silence. But the Angell quickly delivered her out of this Agony into a greater; out of this feare into a more tormenting care. *Feare not MARY,* saith he, *for thou hast found favour with God; for loe thou shalt conceive in thy wombe, and beare a Sonne, and shalt call his name I H E S U S. He shall be great, and shall be called the Sonne of the most high, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall raigne over the house of Iacob for ever, and of his Kingdome shall be no end.* To this her answer was, *How shall that be, since I know no man?* It is true, it is true, most blessed Virgin, thou knowest no man; but let thy modesty rest secure; for the operation of God, and not of man is here required. God should never be

conceived in thee, wert thou not a Virgin, nor borne of thee shouldst thou not remaine such. Thou canst not be spotted with the conception, or birth of an issue so immaculate. This feare is as needlesse as that of defiling thy fairest fingers with the purest fountaine. If *Obededon* having received the Arke within his walles, was io enriched with all manner of Treasure, that Felicity was voyced to have descended from heaven into his house; what shall we judge of thy supreme blisse, O glorious Virgin! who art not to be the receptacle of a wooden Arke, but of his only Sonne? With confidence therefore consent to thy owne happinesse, and the Redemption of all Humanity.

But,

But, indeed, I do not wonder at her astonishment, when I consider her bashfulnesse. Meethinks I see her now casting her eyes up to heaven, now fixing them on the earth, and now againe on the Ambassadour himselfe, resolving to give up her soule rather then her virginity. Harsh must the word (conception) needs sound to her who was a votary nere to know man, whose onely love was prayer, whose onely childe was piety. But when the Angell urged Gods will, she forthwith yeelded a handmaid to her Lords desire. Let us intently listen to the text. *And the Angel answer'd, and said unto her, The holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing that shall be borne of thee shall be*

be called the Sonne of God. And behold thy cousen Elizabeth, shee hath also conceived a sonne in her old age, and this is the sixt moneth with her who was called barren. For with God nothing shall bee impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, bee it to mee according to thy word. See here united an incomparable humility, and an obedience even unto death. For the consenting to be the mother of God was not easie to her, in that a meek, and humble spirit with greater difficultie ascends the highest steppe of Honours Throne, then a proud descends thence to the bottome, being a thing in nature farre harder to climbe then to come downe. I any man shall yet rest unsatisfied and shall make a further enquiry after this difficulty, he may please

to consider that her humility bal-  
lanc't her Sonnes exalted, and her  
owne dejected estate; and as well  
meditated the care, the diligency,  
the reverence, and obsequiousnes,  
as the dignity, and excellency of  
her whom God would vouchsafe  
the most glorious title of Mother.  
She wisely weighed that the An-  
gels were not worthy to wait on  
him, and therefore the service of  
her whole life must as farre ex-  
ceed, as the name of Gods Mother  
did excell that of Servant, or An-  
gell. If Saint *Peter*, yet in the dawn  
of Grace, could so clearly discern  
his Masters greatnesse, as that he  
cried out, *Depart from me a sinner,*  
as deeming himselfe unworthy of  
his presence: If the Centurion for  
the same respect thought his house  
too base to receive him, what  
should

should she thinke who was not to take him into her ship, or her lodging, but into her wombe, where he was to remaine not a visitant, but a dweller? Full well also she understood that her consent was not onely required to be the parent of the Almighty, but the Spouse also of his holy Spirit, to whose inspirations she ought a greater obedience then others, having received from the same spirit a greater measure of grace, and honour. She clearly foresaw that she was not onely chosen to conceive the Son of God, to bring forth, to nurse, and governe him, but also perforce to yeeld him up (such being the divine pleasure) to a three and thirty yeares persecution, and lastly to the cursed death of the crosse, the salvation of others depending

*Many  
ancient  
Writers  
hold that  
she had  
the gift  
of prophetic.*



pending on his destruction. And that she did foresee all this, plainly appears by the speech of the Angel to her, who (after he had foretold the conception, and birth of Christ) added, *And he shall be called Iesus*, that is, a Saviour. An awfull reverence, and an inconceivable joy divided, without doubt, her all-holy heart when she contemplated her future being a mother to the Messias. Can a man imagine any thing more difficult, more bitter for humane nature to overcome? Yet did her active virtue vanquish all these impediments, and with an humble, ravish'd soule she expected the entrance of him into her sacred wombe, whom already she had surely seated in her heart.

Here

Here before we proceed to her conception, we must observe two things not amply, and fully enough express'd, very remarkable in the Angelicall salutation; First, the dignity of the Ambassadour, next the worth of her to whom his Embassy was directed, together with her many vertues equally eminent in this divine Dialogue.

Concerning the first; he was not a man, but an Angell; neither an Angell of an inferiour order, but of the supreme Hierarchy, which choise and pure spirits having received infinite ornaments and graces from their Lord and Master, retained still his favour, and ever stood before him. *S. Gregory* styles him a principall Angell, treating

*Hom. 34  
in lect.  
Evang.*

her of principall things. Some have  
two not feared to call him the supreme  
y e- Angell, as *Damascen*, and others.  
able Truth will answer for him, that a-  
irst, mongst all the celestiaall spirits,  
our, none are so predicated in holy  
nom Writ as he, and *Michael*, to whom  
ge- the Declaration, and Exposition  
ual- of so high Mysteries so often were  
Dia- committed, as in *Daniel*, *Zachary*,  
and *Mary* is specified. Some will  
not have his name to signifie God, and  
an man, and that this Etymology  
but containes a miraculous mystery.  
ich Amongst these is *Proculus* Arch-  
re- Bishop of *Constantinople*. *Geber*,  
ra- saith he, signifies man; *El God*, allu-  
er, ding to his Embassy, which treated of  
ver his approaching birth, who was both  
les God and man. Saint Bernard judg-  
ng eth the servant of *Abraham* to have  
o beene a type of *Gabriel*; for he was  
sent

*Serm. de  
Virginis  
assump.*

*In I cap.  
Luc.*

*In par-  
vis. serm.  
Gen. 24.*

*Hom. de  
incom-  
prehensi-  
bili Dei  
natura.*

*Serm.  
142.*

*Serm. I.  
de nat.  
Virgin.*

sent by his Master not to seek any  
Virgin that came next to hand  
but such a one as the Lord God  
had prepared for the Sonne of his  
Lord. *This Gabriel, saith Saint*  
*Chrysostome, the Painters present*  
*to us winged; not that God created*  
*him so, but to denote the sublimity*  
*and agility of the celestiall Nature,*  
*as also to admonish us that with grate-  
full hearts wee acknowledge him to*  
*have for our cause descended from his*  
*highest habitation. And sweetly*  
*Chrysologus; An Angell treated with*  
*Mary concerning our salvation, be-  
cause an Angell had dealt with Eve*  
*touching our damnation. This blest*  
*Spirit, and Saint Iohn the E-*  
*vangelist, Damianus compares to*  
*two Lyons which carefully guard*  
*this our sacred subject. I will now*  
*here seeke to satisfie the over-*  
*curious*

curious, and needlesse doubts of *Luther*, and others, whether she knew *Gabriel* to be an Angell, or no, nor whether or no he entred her chamber the doore being shut, nor whether he appear'd to her in a gentle familiar shape, or in his full splendour, as when he so much amaz'd *Zachary*, and stricke him dumbe. These questions serve rather to busie curiositie, then enflame zeale. Neither hath all that tender sexe (to whose good I dedicate this discourse) received an education that renders them capable Iudges of such disputes. And I freely acknowledge that in this Treatise I have not so much as used any one word not frequent, and familiar, because I would make the sense cleare to the Femal Readers. Withall I professe my  
E scope

scope is not to sharpen their wits, but to beautifie their lives, and to kindle in their faire bosomes an holy ambition to aspire to the perfections of that devout life, which this our incomparable Lady led, and ended with the applause of men, and Angels.

Laying aside therefore these superfluous arguments, I will proceed (as my method commands me) to deliver her inestimable worth, and sober demeanour towards the Angell, which no eloquence can so well expresse as a silent, and reverent admiration. Much I need not say of her of whom I never can speake enough, especially having already produc'd so many ancient, and learned extollers of her excellencies, to  
which

which my vote would adde no more then a dimme lampe to the glorious eye of heaven, or an obscure gloworme to a starry night. Yet since at the Altar of this meek one (sweet and chaste as the Incense there daily burned) a single graine sent from a simple heart is acceptable, I will not feare to pay her a due oblation, though it come as short of her value, as I of her goodnesse. May it please thee then, pious Reader, gratefully, with me to acknowledge that this is she who gave flesh to him by whom all flesh is sav'd. This was the Dove that first brought to us the Olive of our peace. This is the Rainbow, or first signe of our reconciliation to the divine Majesty. And (to shut up all in a little) this was the Tabernacle, and Throne of the Almighty,

E 2

mighty, whence (his Majesty obscured) his love shined forth to all humanity. But in that a plaine delivery of her vertues adorne her more then can all the flowers of Rhetoricke; I will (though in an inelligent phrase) set such downe as shall appeare most eminent in this unparalell'd colloquy, wherein were handled the profound mysteries of the sacred Trinity, as of the Fathers omnipotency, the holy Ghosts efficacy, the Sonnes excellency, and in him the proprietie of both natures.

*Her prudence.*

Her Prudence shall take the first place, not as the greatest, but as the most diffusive, because cleane through this Dialogue it blends with all the rest. First, she awfully, and advisedly gives him full audience,



ence, and at once both observes the laws of patience, and the custome of good manners in quietly attending the period of his salutation. Many of her Sexe would have so cut him off at every word, that hee should never have peec't his speech together againe. Being more mistresses of their tongues then their eares; they would never have given him hearing till they had beene weary of talking. One of these, *Juvenal* makes mention of in his 6. Satyre, who made a din able to free the Moon from the power of the enchanter

This vertue of an opportune silence few women

*The common sort when the Moone was eclipsed thought her to be enchanted, and with basons and other things made a hideous noyse to barre her from hearing the charmers voyce.*

*Her opportunity  
silence  
and cau-  
tion of  
speech.*

obtain, if they do, it comes to them the last of all other. Their tongues are clocks which, once wound up, few of them go lesse then sixteene houres. But this wisest of Saints in a seasonable silence, and caution of speech, was alike admirable: Inso-much that through the whole Bible we finde not that she spake above five times. Twice to the Angell *Gabriel*, as *How shall this be*: and againe, *Behold the Hand-maid of the Lord*. Next in the encounter betweene her, and her cousen *Elizabeth*. A fourth time to her beloved Sonne after long absence, *Why have you dealt so with us*. Lastly, when she becomes a petitioner for the poore, *Because they have no wine*. Here in this place she intensively hearkens to the Angell, whom she heares twice ere she replies

plies once. She made two pawſes  
uſher her answer, which ſhe fram'd  
with ſuch care, and ſobriety, as if  
Modesty had ſeal'd up her bo-  
ſome, and lippes, and that without  
her ſpeciall warrant they were not  
to be opened. And though her  
thoughts were perplex'd and trou-  
bled, yet ſhe apparrell'd them in  
ſuch a cleare, ſmooth calme of lan-  
guage, that it would have genti-  
liz'd Barbariſme it ſelfe. When her  
Chaſtitie is call'd in queſtion  
(which ſhe eſteemes above health,  
liberty, or life it ſelfe) ſhe positive-  
ly denies nothing in that ſtrange,  
and to her impoſſible aſſertion of  
the Angell, but answers with an  
humble enquirie, *How ſhall that be?*  
Well might ſhe make this demand,  
ſince ſhe knew by humane power  
it could not be effected, and the

Angell had not yet revealed, that such was the divine will. Though never soule endured a greater conflict then hers, and that Feare had stretched the strings of her heart to their utmost extension, yet chose she rather that they should breake in sunder, than she into Intemperancy. Some women (though chaste, yet curst, and hasty) having once heard their chastity brought in question, would have omitted all interrogations, and have given the Angell a Sermon for his salutation, and have reviled his name, if not offered violence to his person. But in this sweetest of creatures, mildenesse and modesty kissed each other; so that nothing could flow from her that was not pleasing and gentle. Yet could not her amazed lookes

con-

conceale her feare, which afflicts  
farre more than grieve; for we  
grieve onely for what is past, but  
we feare all that can happen. The  
mercifull Angell reading in her  
forehead the perplexity of her  
minde, resolved presently to ridde  
her of the tormenting doubt she  
was in, and to banish Feare out of  
that Face reserved only for Beau-  
ty, and the Graces to dwell in. He  
therefore hides this great secret  
no longer from her, but expounds  
to her the manner and meanes of  
her conception, which no sooner  
entred her eares, then consent her  
heart; and with a prostrate soule  
she made her will conform it selfe  
to Gods; *Behold, saith she, the hand-  
maid of the Lord, &c.* In this con-  
sent of hers we may discover al-  
most as many perfections as  
words

words. Some draw hence an observation, that the salvation of mankind depended upon her consent, and consequently the damnation upon her refusall. My meditation dares not climbe so high, not being able to conceive how possibly the searcher of hearts should receive a repulse from his chosen one, nor how his omnipotency can be confined to one onely meanes in the Redemption of mankind. It shall suffice me to derive hence three of the greatest Christian Vertues, her Faith, her Obedience, her Humility.

*Her  
Faith.*

Faith is the hand whereby we lay hold on Christ, and his Merits, without which, saith *S. Austin*, all morall vertues whatsoever are

no

no better than gorgious sins. The dignity and necessity of this supernaturall gift cannot but evidently appeare to the meanest understanding, in that no man is ignorant that without Christ we cannot be fav'd, and without Faith we cannot apprehend Christ, nor apply his deserts, and passion to our polluted soules. In this which excells all other perfections did this happy Mother of our *Emanuel* surpass all other creatures, as here in briefe, and hereafter more at large I shall demonstrate. *S. Austin* both in knowledge and authority infinitely exceeds me, and therefore I desire you would heare him for me. *Strengthened by a singular Faith, saith he, she made Gods Sonne hers, more happy truely in conceiving Christ in her minde, then his flesh*

*Lib. de  
sanct.  
Virg.  
cap. 3.*

flesh in her wombe. Endued with this  
 faith she fear'd, and reverenc'd him  
 whom she bore, whom as soone as she  
 brought forth she ador'd, and was the  
 first beholder of the glory of his resur-  
 rection. Would I muster up my  
 forces I could produce many o-  
 ther Champions of the same  
 worth and antiquity, that with an  
 indefatigable zeale, doe vindicate  
 the faith of this blessed Virgin a-  
 gainst some of these latter ages,  
 who accuse her as defective in that  
 wherein she was most accomplisht.  
 Their objections have beene long  
 since answer'd by Saint *Austin*,  
 Saint *Ambrose*, and divers others  
 of those Primitive times. Saint *An-*  
*stin* distinguisheth thus betweene

*Lib. 16.* Zacharies demand and hers. *Za-*  
*de civit.* chary when he sayes, Whence shall I  
*cap. 24.* know this? or, By what meanes shall I  
 know



know this, I, and my wife being so aged? he spoke this out of despaire, not by the way of inquisition. But Mary when she asks; How shall that be, since I know no man? shee utter'd this enquiring, not despairing. Wherefore to Zachary it is said, thou shalt be dumbe because thou believest not; but to her the cause is expounded, because while she doth question, she doubteth not of the promise. And to the same purpose, and almost in the same words speakes Saint Ambrose, whose testimony I omit, lest I should prove tedious, and obscure to the tender sexe, to whose profit this weake Essay of mine is chiefly intended. Yet my zeale to her whose true admirer I am, compels me briefly to deface all those aspersiones, which the adversaries to her, and piety have layd

layd upon her. And I am wholly transform'd into wonder as oft as I consider how malice, and her spawne can bee so frontlesse as grossely to deprave the meaning of the Text onely to detract from her, and should be so audacious as to contradict the holy Ghost himselfe, who by the mouth of *Elizabeth* pronounceth her blessed, because she beleev'd. True it is, their expositions give a light to the Scriptures, but it is such a one as we receive from lightning, which brings with it rather terrour then comfort.

*Her obedience.*

Here her obedience calls upon me to cut off, I cannot say, this digression, but vindication of her honour. Though she deserved sovereignty, and command, yet delighted

ed she in nothing more then in this  
submissive vertue proper onely to  
a Subject, and was a diligent pra-  
ctitioner of it through her whole  
life in imitation of him who was  
obedient even to an ignomini-  
ous death. Her faith, and obedi-  
ence were of equall speed; for she  
no sooner heard the Angell relate  
that the Almighty had ordained  
she should beare the worlds Re-  
deemer, but she beleev'd, and con-  
sented that it should be so. She had  
learnt in her infancy, that obedi-  
ence with God is better then sacri-  
fice, and therefore she was as swift  
as thought in agreeing to the di-  
vine ordinance, that so posteritie  
might distinguish betweene her o-  
bedience, and that of others whose  
Wills, and Vnderstandings have a  
combat before they can bee  
brought

brought to a consent. But this was onely a lovely branch of that beautifull tree, her humility, on which a perpetual Autumne attended; for it continually bore fruit.

*Her humility.*

Of this Vertue I must treat more at large then of the rest, because it is extensive cleane through all the actions of her life. Of this there are many sorts, whose severall countenances, and shapes we will here draw to the life, lest the Reader be impos'd upon, and verily beleieve he enjoyes the true one, when, indeed, he is onely possessor of the adulterate.

*Natural humility*

We will begin with the Naturall Humility, which is to be found in many, who being basely borne, and bred, and poorely spirited, aspire  
not

not to greatnesse, but rest fully  
contented with that sordid calling  
Fortune hath allotted them. This  
Humility is none of those that ver-  
tue doth warrant. There is another  
kinde which we may call sensuall,  
and this makes men refuse ho-  
nours, not that they do not desire  
them, but for the trouble, care, and  
danger that attend them. This  
Humility is base, and degenerate.  
There is a third proud one of the  
Hypocrite, who though he be am-  
bitious of dignities, and seeks them  
by all cunning, and undermining  
wayes, yet (to be reputed humble)  
he seemes to flie them. This Hu-  
mility is false, and fained. A fourth  
there is philosophicall, and morall,  
and this consists in the knowledge  
of a mans selfe, and his miserable  
condition, so that by a naturall  
F light

*Sensuall  
humility*

*Hypo-  
criticall  
humility*

*Philoso-  
phicall  
humility*

*Mosai-  
call, or  
Iudai-  
call Hu-  
mility.*

light he can see to humble himselfe, and be serviceable to all men, yet no further then the dignitie of his estate allows, and humane reason requires. So that in this mans opinion it should not be humility, but basenesse in a Gentleman to pardon an injury done him, or to place himselfe in an Hospitall as a servant to attend the sicke, and needy. This Humility will not endure the Christian Test. A fifth Mosaicall, or Iudaicall, offers it selfe to our consideration; and this hath a neare resemblance of the true one; for by the perusall of the written Law we come to know our selves more perfectly then all the Philosophers of the world can teach us. To this purpose Saint *Paul* saith; *From the Law comes the knowledge of sinne*: and in another place,

place, *I had not knowne concupiscence to bee a sinne had not the Law said, Thou shalt not covet.* In this Mirrour we discerne our originall corruption, and all our disordinate passions, and affections, together with our ignorance, and frailty. By this Touchstone we finde all our moral philosophical vertues to be but counterfeit. But this carries with it a very detrimentall discommoditie; for it leads us beyond hope of salvation, and there leaves us. For when a man shall consider that an unattainable perfection, and an exact observance of the Law is required at his hands (wherein he is commanded to honour God with all his soul, and with all his might, and to love his neighbour as himselfe) and yet withall shall discover in himselfe an utter disabilitie

to execute these holy commands, a frozen diſſection wil ſo benumme all his thoughts that not one of them will be of force to uphold it ſelfe from ſinking into the bottomleſſe pit of deſpaire.

*The true  
Chriſti-  
an Hu-  
mility.*

But with the true Chriſtian Humilitie it is otherwiſe which (having firſt made a ſubmiſſive acknowledgement of its owne ingratitude, pride, avarice, injuſtice, impietie, and infinite other imperfections) by a ſtrong apprehenſion layes hold on the mercie of God in Chriſt. And this goodneſſe of God towards us makes our finnes more odious even in our own eies; no otherwiſe then the tender kindeſſe of his Father made the prodigall childe more clearly ſee his owne error, and diſobedience. For  
this



this makes that speech of God to the Iewes, *When you come into the Land of promise, then you shall know your sinnes?* as if he should have said, *How often have you distrusted me, and not onely murmur'd against me, but abandon'd me, and ador'd Idols, making them your guides, and attributing to them the benefits you have received from me?* so the regenerated Christian being once entred into the spirituall Kingdome of Christ, sees more clearely his sinnes, then he did before his calling, as having received a greater Light. The excellency of this vertue in a Christian is beyond humane expression. Not amisse a learned Father of the Church stiles this the Treasurer of all other vertues. The antient Christians commonly usurpe Humility

F 3

Hieron.  
in Epist.  
ad Celsant.

mility for vertue it selfe. Christ  
cals it poorenesse of Spirit, and  
discourfing of mans Beatitude,  
sets it in the Front. This and  
Pride are at endlesse oddes; for  
this is sociable, and loves com-  
pany, wheras pride affects solitude,  
and is for the most part alone.  
In the Empire of Pride, two can-  
not stand quietly together, where-  
as in the dominions of Humility,  
an infinite number may be placed  
without either combat, or strife.  
Pride is never void of feare, and  
doubt, whereas this stands secure  
with *Jonas* in the bottome of the  
Sea. Pride is ever ambitious of the  
first seate, this of the lowest, and  
therefore is as much extoll'd by  
all men, as the other cride downe.  
Pride assumes all to it selfe, and is  
full of selfe-love. This refuseth  
even

even its owne due, and undervalue it selfe, as knowing that it can justly call nothing its owne, but sinne. Pride stormes at an injury receiv'd; this embraceth all occasions that may exercise its patience. Pride (like all things puffed up, and light) is wavering, and blown here and there by every gust of Fortune; this in stability is a rock, not in hardnesse, being soft, and white as the Downe of Swans. Yet though this Vertue be of all other the most innocent, and submissive, it is withall the most powerfull; for, as nature, so God abhors vacuity, and therefore (finding the humble utterly empty of affectation, presumption, and what else is derogatory to his honour) hee fills him with his grace and spirit. What should I

say more? Humility is fearelesse in danger, free in bondage, rich in poverty, quiet in persecution, noble, and gloriorious in ignominy, lofty in lownesse, joyfull in anguish, and happy in the midst of misery. This made *Moses* speeclesse, *Abraham* to acknowledge himselfe dust and ashes, *Iohn* the Baptist to esteeme himselfe a meer Voyce, and Saint *Paul* to account himselfe the greatest of all sinners. This Iewell was so faire in Christs eye, that to purchase it, he underwent not only poverty, misery, and all indignities, but even execration, and malediction. What would we judge of a great Prince, who, in stead of enlarging his Territories, should abase himselfe so farre as to become a poore subject? Why this did Christ, who (being  
of

of all things the greatest, and best from all eternity) by humility became of all the lowest, and descended even to the profession of service to the meanest of his creatures. It is also an evident marke of his humility, that he chose to be borne of simple and obscure Parents, whereas he might, if he would, have allyed himselfe to the greatest Princes. This gave occasion to the Iewes to mocke him, saying, *Is not Ioseph his Father, and Mary his Mother?* True it is that he was of the House of *David*, but when he was borne, it was in its declination, and of no repute. As the Moone fourteene dayes together, to our sight, encreaseth, and fourteene againe diminisheth, till at length it be seene no more: so in the fourteene generations

rations from *Abraham* to *David*, the House of *David* received advancement in honour, and splendour, and was in his time at the full height; but in the fourteene following generations it was in the wane, and in the dayes of Christ neere utter extinction. And whereas he might have inserted *Sarah*, *Rebecca*, and many other Saints in his Genealogy, he placed *Tamar*, *Raah*, *Ruth*, *Bersabe*, and others of an incestuous race, to shew the world, that, though he hated sinne, he abhorred not sinners. What man is there who, having a lascivious wife detected of whoredome will take her againe? Yet Christ, having espoused the adulterate soule of man, receives her into grace and favour after she hath committed millions of adulteries.

teries. To this effect saith the Prophet, *Though thou hast committed fornication with many Lovers, yet returne, and I will receive thee.* Who is there that being injur'd will not onely forgive the Offendor, but seeke his friendship, I, and lay downe his life for him? All this did Christ, who (being grievously and hainously abused by man) not onely demanded his pardon, as if he himselfe had beene faulty, but made an oblation of his owne heart-bloud to quench the wrath of God justly conceived against him. Another admirable act of his humiliny was, that (God having given him all power in heaven and earth, in so much that he could at his pleasure have destroyed *Judas*, whose treason he foreknew) all the revenge he tooke, was

was to wash his feet, and to call him Friend when he came to apprehend him. To these I may add his living in obscurity from his twelfth to his thirtieth yeere, in all which time we reade not any thing of him. I will conclude with all the crosses and calamities he endur'd, of which in his life he never reaped any fruit, and at his death had his Innocency onely predicated by one, and that one a Thiefe. In a word, during his abode here below (whether you consider his Doctrine, Actions, or Passion) he was not so much delighted with the exercise of any vertue, as of this gentle, meek one, that so he might imprint it as his owne sacred stampe, or marke in those mindes which he would have known to be his. And, above  
the



thereft, into the chafte bofome of  
his deareft Mother did he fend this  
divine gift, before his birth by in-  
fufion, and afterwards engrafted it  
there by example. And this we  
may well perceive by her fo clofe-  
ly following the patterne that ſhe  
precedes all but himfelfe in this  
milde, offenceleffe vertue. In this  
rare quality as ſhe had an une-  
quall'd Maſter, ſo ſhe prov'd a  
matchleffe Schollar. He who is ig-  
norant of the excellency ſhe hath  
attain'd to in this one perfection,  
I dare pronounce him withall ig-  
norant of Gods holy Writ, and in-  
capable of all goodneffe derived  
thence. Yet ſome ſacrilegious  
theeves there are, who robbe this  
beautifull Temple of its prime or-  
nament, this ſweeteft Garland of  
its faireſt Flower. They maintaine

*Her hu-  
mility.*

(me

(me thinks the earth should shake it selfe, and them when they utter it) that she was humbled, not humble. These I may more properly averre to be learning, not learned. They may with as much justice deprive the Rose of her blush, the Lilly of her white, the Violet of her purple, and the Christall of its clearenesse, as her of this pretious ornament, which she obtain'd by a studious pious imitation, and preserv'd with a holy care. But my wonder is the lesse when I contemplate the continuall Antipathy betweene Impudency, and Innocencie. Whosoever shall settle his meditation on her discourse with the Angell, her pilgrimage to her counsels house, and her divine Hymne there (though he have sworn himselfe the slave of prejudice) he will  
breake

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breake his chaine, and reassume so much freedom as to declare her truly humble. Sure I am if they would have her halfe a degree humbler, they make her wholly abject. To my thinking these sixe words alone (Behold the hand-maid of the Lord) are able to convince of error six thousand such shallow Authors. To those who are plac'd in an extreame height, all things below seeme farre smaller then indeed, they are, but to themselves they appeare the same; but here it fals out otherwise; where the introducer of one pregnant blessing that contain'd all other into the world (and therefore worthily placed above it) thinks all things under her farre greater then her selfe, and above her in value. Certainly all the ancient Fathers  
with

with one consent affirme that she deserv'd to be Empresse of all others, who humbled her selfe below them all. For my owne part, I am so transported with the meditation of her meeknesse that me thinks I heare her thus expressing the humility of her sanctified heart to the heavenly Nuntio.

*Is this a delightfull dreame, or a pleasing vision that thus ravisheth my soule? What a lovely prospect is this? What do mine eyes behold? Cedars stooping to shrubs? Mountains to valleys? The Occan courting a Riveret? I discover more then all this. I see Heaven descending to Earth, the supream Majesty to humane misery, a blessed Angell to a wretched mortall. True it is I am the structure of Gods owne hands, but an edifice not cleare,*  
not

## *The life of the Virgin MARY.* 81

an faire enough for the habitation of  
his onely Sonne. Alas, alas! I am a  
vessel too uncleane to enclose a Deity.  
Is this flesh of mine pure enough to  
clothe purity it selfe? I am not worthy  
to be reputed his childe, much lesse his  
parent. Oh lend me thy harmonious  
voyce, thy heavenly Rhetoricke, thou  
celestiall Oratour, that I may render  
him thanks, and praise; though not  
equall, yet nearer to the grace I have  
received. I deny not but wee see his  
Name written in every thing here be-  
low, but in obscure Characters, like  
the discovery of the Sunne in a pud-  
dle. Thou art nearer him in essence,  
in presence, in goodnes, in knowledge,  
and canst finde out wor<sup>d</sup>s more sutea-  
ble to his worth. Wherefore I earnestly  
beseech thee in thy best phrase to pre-  
sent the unfained gratitude of his  
most humble Hand-maid, who esteems

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her

*her selfe unworthy to touch, much more to conceive him. Neither shalt thou thy selfe depart without most humble thanks for the eternall honour thou hast done me by this visit.*

It is probable enough she said much to this purpose, this forme of speech being agreeable to her disposition, and demeanour. To conclude this point, six cleare demonstrations of her Humility eminent above the rest, the holy Writ offers to our serious, and reverend consideration. The first in this submissive conference with the Angel. The second in the house of *Zachary*, where the more her vertue is predicated by her cousin, the more she humbles her selfe. The third in her delivery, where she meekly submitted her selfe

selfe to all wants, and inconveni-  
ces. The fourth in her Purificati-  
on, when she observ'd the custome  
of other uncleane sinfull women,  
and rankt her selfe with them. The  
fifth in betrothing her selfe to a  
Carpenter, and in paying as great  
an obedience to him as ever wo-  
man did to husband, and in joy-  
ning with him in labour to get a  
poore living, to maintaine them-  
selues, and their Sonne. The sixth  
in having a care of the poore, and  
in associating them at all times.  
But of all these I shall treat more  
at large in the course of this divine  
story, whose order now brings me  
to the mysticall conception of her  
blessed Sonne, our onely Lord,  
and Saviour Iesus Christ.

The heavenly Ambassadour ha-

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ving

*Her conception.*

*\* This point is much controverted, and I leave it to the discrete Reader what to beleeve. Lib. 18. Moral. ca. 27.*

*De Symbol. ad Catechum.*

ving executed his great Masters command, departs, leaves God, and Man in the wombe, and the Sonne of Righteousnesse is now risen in the virginall orbe. For this is the \* tenent of the true, and ancient Catholicke Church, that she conceiv'd immediately after the Angels speech, whom I had rather follow, then accompany many of these later times who oppose it. I will onely produce a few testimonies, and that of *Gregory* the great shall be the Leader. *The Angell, saith he, declaring, and the Spirit approaching, instantly the Word is in the wombe, and presently in the wombe the Word is made flesh, the incommutable essence coeternall to him with the Father, and the holy Ghost still remaining.* Him secondeth *Saint Austin*, of all the Fathers the most subtle,



subtle and sollid. These ensuing are his owne words. *When the Angell saluted the Virgin, then did the holy Ghost make her fruitfull, then did that woman conceive a man without a man, then was shee replenisht with grace, then shee receiv'd the Lord, that hee might be in her who made her.* And in another place he writeth thus. *Make no delay, O Virgin, say but the word speedily to the Messenger, and receive thy Sonne, give thy Faith, and feele the vertue of it. Behold, saith she, the Handmaid of the Lord, be it to me according to thy word. Here was no delay at all, the divine Agent returneth, and Christ enters the Virginall wombe. The mother of God is suddenly made fruitfull, and is predicated happy throughout all ages. She presently conceived the Divinity of the Word without the*

Serm. 2.  
infesto  
Annun.  
Domin.

*fellowship of a man.* In this celebration of the Nuptials betweene God and nature, while my affection advanceth one steppe, my reverence retires another. Here Reason is transformed into Admiration, Eloquence into silence. Some are rather solicitous to search into the profundity of the Mystery, than humbly to acknowledge it, and by Reason seeke to pry into that which excludes all reason. What was before time it selfe, is believed, not comprehended by man; for that transcends the understanding of man which was before his nature. No eyes but those of Faith, can penetrate this Wonder. All things in God are above reason, nothing above Faith. Here a Virgin conceives without the losse of Chastity, a Maide

*This  
concepti-  
on was  
predesti-  
nated be-  
fore  
Time,  
from all  
eternity.*

Maide remaines an immaculate Mother. Eternity is here encompass'd by time, glory masked in misery. A thing finite containes Infinity, a mortall encloseth eternity. Here the Sonne is as antient as his Father, elder than his Mother, and is made of her whom he made. Here is a concurrence, or a congregation of Miracles. It is a miracle that in the forming of such, and so great an issue the aide of man should be utterly excluded, and that as he was man, he was onely made of the pure bloud of the Virgin. It is a miracle that the ordinary number of dayes required in the forming of a humane body is not here observ'd, but in a very moment without succession of time a body is fram'd, and animated. But a greater miracle than

all these is that at the same instant wherein the soule is joyned to the body, the Divinity and Humanity are united in one person, and the eternall Word is inseperably linkt with the flesh; so that the Son of God and man is the same in the Virgins wombe. As for the manner of her conception, I doe not more mervaile at the supernatural! strangenesse of it, then I doe at the daring inquisition, and sensuall expression of some, who relate it in words as grosse as their owne understandings. I only wish I could free the most learned, and ingenious *Erasmus* from the just imputation of a lascivious folly in the Essayng to unfold this sacred Mystery. He compares God to a Woer, the Angell to a sollicitour, and *Mary* to the beloved, and proceeds

ceeds further than either the divine Will, or humane modesty permit. He treates of this venerable, this stupendious encounter betweene the Divinity and Humanity in the same amorous phrase with which the Poets describe the wanton meeting of *Dido* and *Aeneas* in the Cave. I will not rip up the particulars in which he is faulty this way, lest I runne into the same error which in him I reprehend, and imprint a blush on the cheekes of my bashfull Readers. This conception was as spotlesse, and as cleare from all pollution as is a sweet Odour when it enters the sense. *Here, saith Saint Austin, the Word is the Husband, the Eare the Wife, in this glorious splendour is the Sonne of God conceiv'd, in this purity generated.* Of the same cleare,

Eraf. in  
Anno-  
tat. Lei  
in Ap-  
pendice  
ad Anta-  
pologi-  
am Su-  
toris. 3

Serm.  
II. in  
natal.  
Domini.

Lib. 1. de  
operib.  
spiritus  
sancti.  
cap. 9.

cleare, and cleane sense is *Rupertus* on this very passage. *When the truly believing Maide*, saith he, *opening at once her minde and mouth said, Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it to me according to thy Word*; in the very instant (to make good the words of the Angell) the holy Ghost came upon her, and enter'd through the open dores of her Faith. What part did he enter? first the Chappell of her chaste bosome, then the Temple of her holy and incorrupt wombe: Her bosome, that she might be made a Prophetesse, her wombe, that shee might become a mother. Now for the time of this conception, whether or no it were precisely on the 25. day of March, I will not strive to chaine any mans beleefe to a resolution herein, though I finde many old and great Doctors of the Church to have

have held it for a truth. Many questions here arise which I have neither time, nor desire to discusse. I will onely looke into the deportment of this incomparable creature after that she knew she was become the receptacle of a Deity. The meere apprehension of such an unheard of honour in other women, would have begotten pride, arrogancy, and disdain, not onely of all their sexe, but of mankind it selfe. They would have repin'd at their breathing of common ayre, and (scorning the earth they trod on) have nourisht an ambition to walke on the battlements of heaven. But this Maide above imagination excellent, the more she was grac'd and dignified, the more she was humbled. When all men admir'd, and even

even ador'd her, and judg'd her worthy to be presently assumed into heaven, she was ready to creepe into the center of the earth, and there to hide her, thinking that every one pointed at her, as undeserving that supreme dignity confer'd on her by God himselfe. And whereas others would have studied nothing but rich Tissues, and embroyderies to weare, and the most costly Persian Carpets to tread on, she meditated simplicity in apparell, and a good paire of shooes to beare her afoot journey over the steepe and stony mountaines, intending to bestow a Visit on her cousin *Elizabeth*.

Many





39. And Mary arose in those dayes, and  
 went into the Hill Country &  
 40. And entred into the house of zacharias,  
 and saluted Elizabeth.  
 41. And it came to passe, that when Elizabeth heard  
 y<sup>e</sup> salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her wombe.

*Her vi-  
sitation.*

Many of her kinde, and in her high estate, and condition would hardly have acknowledg'd, or receiv'd their kindred, much lesse have trotted over hils, and dales, to make a tender of their duties to them. Here is a rare spectacle, Humility climing, a thing as contrary to the nature of it, as it is to things ponderous of themselves to flie. This soveraigne of her sexe having the celestiall Monarch include<sup>206</sup> in the narrow compasse of her wombe, made haste to passe those steep, stony, and rugged hils, the willingnesse of her minde enabling the feeblenes of her body. And, to say the truth, whether should she (whose worth exalted her above all things else) go but to places as eminent in scituation

as she in sweetnesse of disposition?  
Whither should this Eagle flie, but  
to the summity of the world?  
Sure I am she could not fore above  
the pitch of her owne value. Shee  
forsooke the sweet embellisht val-  
lies, where with ease she might  
have walked, and betooke her selfe  
to the craggy mountaines, which  
not without infinite labour, and  
paine she could ascend. By these  
rough, and uneven wayes, have the  
holy Martyrs themselues mounted  
the promontory of vertue, and  
have found the end of their jour-  
ney as sweet as their travell bitter.  
*O vertue the minds that travell to thy  
Indies how rich they returne! They  
come backe laden with those pretious  
ornaments that beautifie this life, and  
those Panchayan odours that sweeten  
the deprivation of it, and perfume po-  
sterity.*

sterity. True it is that thy seas are rough, & to him that lancheth into the deepe, appeare at first terrible, but if with confidence & constancy he plows them up, and with a fixed patience endures the frownes of an angry skie, he shall at length discover a calme smooth as thy owne forehead, on which Fortune, Time, and vice could never yet imprint one wrinkle. Vnder thy sacred safe conduct bath many a superstitiously devout distressed small pilgrim (after the endurance of heat, and cold without, of hunger, and thirst within, and other miserable accidents innumerable) arrived with comfort at the supposed shrine of this our blessed Saint, who here (having no other guard than thy potent selfe) exposeth her dainty feet to the knowne cruelty of flints hard, and sharpe alike, and her sacred person to labour, and infi-

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the hazards incident to the poore  
Traveller. She who meriteth to sit  
under a cloth of state, beset with  
the earths most precious stones,  
and a presence throng'd with Em-  
presses, as happy waiters graced in  
this attendance doth here commit  
her self into the hands of solitude,  
and danger. Thus did the Spouse  
of the holy Spirit overcome the  
narrow, and difficult paths of these  
steepe mountaines, Charity lead-  
ing her by one hand, and Humility  
by the other. And if we diligently  
peruse Gods sacred Word, we  
shall there finde the Mountaines  
honour'd with many notable acts.  
Where did that parent of an innu-  
merable issue, *Abraham*, prepare  
the immolation of his only sonne?  
On a mountaine. Where did *Moses*  
receive the Tables of the divine  
H Lawe

Law? On a mountaine. Where did Christ, (his Humanity concealed) transfigure his face into a countenance of eternall glory? On a mountaine. Where did he shed his purest blood, and lay downe his dearest life as an expiation for our hainous and manifold sinnes? On a mountaine. But why these famous Acts were performed on mountains rather then in vallies, Reason hath not a sight strong, and quicke enough to discover. But this is evident, that God hath not plac'd Heaven it selfe on the one side of us, or under our feet, but over our heads, that we might erect our looks, and fixe them on his eternall habitation, and aspire to enter the celestiall Canaan; indeed our true countrey, out of which while we live, we leade but a dying,

ing, and a flavish life, and are no other then unfortunate exiles. And surely the very sight of sublime places breeds in us high thoughts. We commonly looke downe on things despicable, the eyes of admiration are bent upward.

The cause why she tooke this journey, I shall endeavour to relate so briefly, that I will strive to avoid even long syllables. Yet do so many pious doctrines, and uses, flow from these two Christalline springs, that they alone are sufficient to compose an entire booke of a vast volume.

The Angell that he might beget, and strengthen a beleefe in *Mary* of what he had said confirms this miracle with another, and tels

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her

her that her Cousen *Elizabeth* also in her old declining age had conceiv'd a sonne, and that this was now the sixth moneth of her being quicke. These glad tydings, no doubt, delighted much our blessed Ladies minde, where they could not stay without rendring a faire encrease of fruit, first in meditation, then in action. Questionlesse, she no sooner heard them but her soul was delivered of a twinne of vows; the first was, to praise God, that he out of his best pleasure, and infinite goodnesse had vouchsafed to crowne her cousens fruitfull vertue with the blessing of a childe, she being now in yeares, when despaire had chased all such hopes out of her breast, and barrennesse (as the world conceiv'd) had seal'd up her wombe. The  
other



other was, all impediments set apart, to give her cousin a visit in her owne Country, and habitation. Having performed the first, her thanksgiving for her, she undertakes the latter, her journey to her. Nor was she long about it, but with all speed possible set forward, lest she might seeme not readily to obey the incitation of the holy Ghost, or be wanting to her cousin in any good office shee could doe her. Neither could the consideration of her owne Majesty, of the teeming estate she was in, of the disasters to which Travellers are subject, of the unevennesse of the way, or of the \* length (which *Melancthon* affirms to have beene twenty Dutch miles) deter

In con-  
cione de  
visitat.  
Mariæ.  
\* From  
Naza-  
reth to  
Jerusalem, where that Elizabeth dwelt, not many  
moderne Divines but S. Austin, and Beda affirme.

her from undergoing this tedious pilgrimage. And as she readily undertakes it, so she makes haste in it. She well understood that delays in spirituall affaires were as dangerous as relapses in bodily diseases.

*Her* Behold here a prodigall  
*Charity.* Charity that hath no respect of it selfe, being onely intentive on the good of another. It was charity that withdrew her from her beloved privacy into the publike view, which till then she had ever shun'd. It was Charity that added wings to her feet, and armed her heart against all sinister accidents that could happen. It was Charity that emboldened her to goe to her cousin without any invitation, not being expected by her, or, happily, by face knowne to her, and with confidence

dence of welcome to enter her house. It was charity that caus'd her to tender service there where it was due to her selfe. It was charity that cheer'd her up, and sent her on this congratulating Embassy. Lastly, it was Charity that invited sanctity it selfe enclosed in this happy Maide to hasten to the sanctification of the childe in the wombe of *Elizabeth*.

Having patiently passed the troubles and annoyances of her voyage, she with joy at length arrives at her cousins habitation, into which she no sooner puts her head, but the reverend Prophetesse (having no other revealer, nor prompter than the holy Spirit) immediately knoweth the Mother of her Lord to be there present,

and knowing doth acknowledge it, and acknowledging doth magnifie her perfections, & professeth her house blessed in being graced with her vouchsafing to be in it. She at first sight discernes in her so many, and so great concealed vertues and mysteries, that a man would judge she had beene present at the enterview of her, and the Angell. Nor did she conceale these her excellencies, but did describe them with such skill and zeale, that Fame was even proud to repeat them. Could the domesticall servants thinke you (having heard their Mistresse predicate her divine qualities, and transcendent condition) containe themselves from divulging a joy which a narrow humane bosome is not capacious enough to receive? Could

Could they abstaine from justly boasting that a beauteous blessed Maide resided then in their house, which together with their soules were by her glorious presence enlightened?

But I can no longer with-hold my pen from setting downe the journey it selfe, and their mutuall salutations in the same words wherein the Text commends them to us. *And Mary arose in those dayes, and went into the hill-Country with haste to a City of Iuda, and enter'd into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to passe as Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the Babe sprang in her belly, and Elizabeth was filled with the holy Ghost: and she cryed with a loud voyce, and said. Blessed art thou amongst*

amongst women, because the fruit of thy wombe is blessed. And whence commeth this to passe that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For loe as soone as the voyce of thy salutation sounded in mine eares, the Babe sprang in my belly for ioy. And blessed is shee that believ'd; for those things shall be performed which were told her from the Lord. Then Mary said; My soule magnifieth the Lord, and my spirit reioyceh in God my Saviour; for he hath regarded the lowlinessse of his handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is from generation to generation on them that feare him. Hee hath shewed strength with his arme, he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

hearts. He hath put downe the mighty from their seates, and hath exalted the humble and meeke. He hath filled the hungry with good things, the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath upholden Israell his servant, being mindefull of his mercy. As he hath spoken to our fathers, to wit, Abraham, and his seed for ever.

In this salutation of *Elizabeth*, the springing of the Babe in her wombe at the sound of our sweetest Ladies voyce requires not onely our observation but astonishment. He that was greater than all the Prophets as yet not borne, and enclosed in the narrow compasse of the Wombe no sooner heard the charming voyce of this heavenly Nightingale, but he leaped for joy, essaying then, and there  
to

*S. Bernard saies,  
that if an Infant  
was so over-joyd  
at the sound of her  
voyce, what will  
the joy of the Ce-  
lestiall inhabi-  
tants be, when  
they shall see and  
heare her? Serm.  
1. de assump. Ma-  
ria.*

to exercise the office of the  
Fore-runner of his Master  
The asseveration of some  
that this was not an effect  
of the Virgins vertue, but  
of the Word incarnate  
may be admitted for  
good, if we onely have an  
eye to her Vertue, and ex-  
clude the aide, and power  
of the divine Grace. But  
all Wisedomes Children  
are by Truth, her selfe in-  
formed that many things  
are lawfully attributed to  
secondary Causes, the pri-  
mary and efficient cause  
not rejected. And this way  
we may impute to *Mary*,  
what worke soever God  
with her co-operating hath  
wrought either in the  
house



of the house of *Zachary*, or else where  
after for the benefit, and instruction of  
some poore mortals. Neither will any  
effected sound, and sollid judgement attri-  
bute any thing to the conspicuous  
merits of the *Virgine Mary*, or any  
other Saint, without the concur-  
rence and predication of the di-  
vine Grace, who by those Saints  
that serve, and feare him, distri-  
butes his gifts, and favour to Man-  
kinde. That sentence of Christ is  
no way obscure; *He that beleeveth in*  
*me, shall do the works that I do, and*  
*greater.* By many examples the  
Scriptures do confirme the com-  
mending of Saints to any mans dwell-  
ling to conferre upon him both  
Grace and Happinesse. Three An-  
gels came to *Abraham*, whom he  
entertain'd taking them for pil-  
grims, when the Patriarch forth-  
with

*Ioh. 14.*

*Gen. 18.*

- with became fortunate in the obtaining of that for which so long he had offer'd up vows to God, namely a sonne; his wife and he, being by the course of nature, past
- Gen. 19.* the generation of children. Againe, two Angels came to Lot, and lodg'd in his house at Sodom, and sav'd their host, and his two daughters from being reduc'd to cinders with their City. *Jacob*
- Gen. 30.* visited wicked *Laban*, to whom God granted a singular blessing for that idolater, in so much that he himselfe confessed it, saying, *I have learned by experience that God hath blessed me for thy sake. Elizeu*
- 4. Kin. 4.* to expresse the kindnesse he received at the hands of his hostesse, the Shunamite, restored her dead sonne to life. The Apostles themselves brought peace, and felicity

to all hospitable men whose dwellings they enter'd. And shall the arrivall of Gods owne mother at the house of *Zachary* prove onely vaine, and fruitlesse in bringing no divine consolation to her kindred? Yes surely, *Elizabeth* tasted the fruit of her all-gladding presence; for she could not conceale the pleasure conceived in her heart, but utter'd it in the best words she could. *John* himselfe also relisht it, and by his motion gave what signes he could of the content, and worship he receiv'd, and payd. Neither could it otherwise be but the Mansion of *Zachary* and the adjacent countrey were both delighted, and sanctified by the three moneths residence of her, who bore not about, but in her, the Author, and consummatour of all piety.

piety. Their joy, questionlesse, was beyond imagination great, in that they had never before seene Gods gifts, and graces passing through so pure an organ of his Spirit. But the aged Prophetesse her selfe, doubtlesse was in a holy delicious Trance at the very first steppe she made over her threshold, and thought her house, but halfe blest till the other foot was in. Their mutuall salutation surely was low, and submissive, which I cannot better expresse then by the supposition of the encounter of two shades softly creeping ore the face of the earth. The Evangelist delivereth onely the Compendium of their conference, which could not be but as long as serious. They treated surely of deepe miraculous Mysteries, as of the incarnation of the  
the

the Word, of the persecution of her, and Gods onely Sonne, as also of his passion, and the salvation of Mankinde. And here it will neither be a thing impious nor impertinent (binding our selues strictly to the substance of their short discourse) to ayme at the amplification thereof, by which happily it may come to passe that the supposition of what they might say may turne to a Truth of what they said indeed. This then, or like to this was, or might be the speech of the holy Matron to the more holy Virgin.

*What looks shall I put on? What words shall I assume, what entertainment shall I finde out, O Princely Virgin! to give thee a welcome answerable to thy merits who art Superiour, to*  
*I the*

*the Saints in Heaven, and the prime glory of thy Sex on Earth? I am wholly transformed into shame when I consider every way thy Excellency, and my unworthinesse. Alas! what is there in miserable me that should invite the mother of my Lord to afford me a visit, who am the meanest of his Creatures? What equality is here? Thou who art full of Grace, comest to me void of it: Thou who art famous for thy Fertility to me who have beene a long time infamous for my Barrennesse. Thy Charity and Humility made thee forget thy sublime and my low estate, and conducted thee to my poore Cottage no way fit to receive thee. Most of thy Sexe having attained to thy supream condition (who did'st conceive and nourish the Creator and Redeemer of the world with that thy clearest blood of which he was made)*

made) would have advanced their heads above Mortality, and disdain- ing all inferiour Conversation would have demanded as their due, to be as- sumed into the imperiall Heaven. But in thee, one heat hath expelled ano- ther, the flames of thy Zeale have ut- terly consumed those of thy Pride (if any thou ever had'st) and thou art so farre from vaunting, that thou by all means seekest to conceale that daintie Fruit of which all Posterity shall taste, and never be satisfied, and for which all Generations shall call thee blessed. But from others thou mayst hide it, from me thou canst not, to whom the Spirit hath reveal'd it, and the sprin- ging of the Childe in my wombe hath testified it; and if the Children of Is- rael should be so dull, and unhappy, as not to apprehend it, God would give the stones an articulate voyce to pro-

claime it. The Lord of mee, and all things else, hath firmly seated himselfe in thee, and chosen thee for his mother, to the end that the seed of Abraham may breake the head of the Serpent, and the Sonne of David bring reliefe to his forlorne and distressed Church, streightly besieged by the Prince of Darknesse, and his infernall Troopes. True it is, I am above thee in yeares, but in desert infinitely below thee, and therefore ought to have prevented this thy painfull journey by comming first to thee to congratulate thy happinesse, and not onely in the behalfe of my selfe, my kindred, and Nation, but in the name of Gods selected people to tender thee most humble though not condigne thanks for so readily assenting to beare, bring forth, and educate their Soveraigne Lord and Redeemer. But thou having gotten



ten the start of me in goodnesse, art  
come to me ere I could set forward  
towards thee, and now thou art here,  
I repine at nothing more than at my  
disability to serve thee. Thou who  
meritest to have the earth, the  
water, and the ayre ransack't to  
please thy pallat, shall have no-  
thing here but the simple viands of  
Nature prepared by as simple an Art.  
But trust me, what ever is here is true-  
ly thine owne, and my selfe to boot.  
My willing heart to waite on thee,  
and obey all thy Commands, shall  
supply all other defects. Such is my  
desire to attend, and please thee that  
doe but signifie thy pleasure by the  
least becke or nod, and thou shalt see  
how nimbly I will bestirre these aged  
limmes, and place before thine eyes  
a plaine and evident conversion of  
Impotency into Ability. I shall not

thinke any paines my weakenesse can endure too great, nor any cost my purse can compasse too deare for thee. Wherefore I earnestly beseech thee to blesse me, and my house with thy long abode, and let not our course and slender fare make thee hasten my death in thy sudden returne. O my brightest Starre! envy me not thy comfortable shine, but let me Live in it till I exchange it for a brighter in Heaven. The dayes of my Pilgrimage are even now at an end; O leave me not then, who art the Staffe and Solace of mine Age! but stay the arrivall of my last minute, and with thy fairest hands close up these my dimme eyes. So shall I bid farewell to this world with content, and enter the other with glory. Thou my sweetest Princessse who hast verified the Prophecy of Esay, and being an unspotted Virgin, dost conceive and  
bring

bring forth to the world our Emanu-  
ill; grant this my first, and most hum-  
ble request. O thou daughter of Abra-  
ham! who hast surpassed thy Fathers  
Faith in beleeving things which  
seeme more impossible to humane  
Reason: if in this rude speech of mine  
I have over-talked my selfe, or under-  
spoken thee, impute it to my declining  
and doting yeares, and grant me thy  
Pardon. Thus I end, but not without  
adding to those I have already given  
thee, a Myriadc of Welcomes, and a  
million of Aves more.

The vertuous Maid undoubted-  
ly was not here mute, but devided  
her speech betweene God and her  
Cousin. She directed (with I  
know not whether greater Piety,  
or Prudency) her praise to the for-  
mer ere she would vouchsafe to

make a reply to the latter. An answer without all peradventure her humanity afforded her, and to this purpose for ought we know, might it be.

“ Dearest Cousin, your own wife-  
“ dome will plead my excuse, in  
“ that I rendred him laud to whom  
“ it belongs, ere I accepted of it my  
“ selfe to whom it is not due. You  
“ magnifie me, and I my Creator.  
“ Your sacred issue moved with de-  
“ light at the sound of my harsh  
“ voyce, and my spirit rejoyceth in  
“ the Mercy of my sweetest Savi-  
“ our. You give me attributes more  
“ proper to my Maker than to me,  
“ not unlike those Heathen who  
“ take off the heads from the Ima-  
“ ges of their Gods, and fasten them  
“ to the shoulders of their Princes

Sta-

“ Statues. Your commendations fit  
“ your selfe better than me, and re-  
“ semble those resplendent rayes  
“ which returne into the radiant bo-  
“ dy that sent them forth. In a  
“ word, you have subscribed my  
“ Name to your owne Character.  
“ The humbling and undervaluing  
“ of your self is a strong argument of  
“ your vertue; for in a field of  
“ Corne we see the empty eares to  
“ hold up their heads, the fuller to  
“ hang them downe. I am in my  
“ Spring, you in your Autumne; I  
“ produce the Blossome, but you  
“ beare the fruit. What the most  
“ penetrating Eye can discerne in  
“ me, the most partiall Tongue will  
“ call a superficiall ornament, but  
“ the dimmest sight may soone dis-  
“ cover that in you, which the most  
“ detracting Penne must be forced  
to

“ to stile essentiall worth. Thus dignified,  
“ nified, give me leave to tell you,  
“ sweetest Cousin, that you offer  
“ me an affront together with your  
“ service. A seemely sight it were  
“ surely to behold decrepit age waiting  
“ on active youth, wisdom  
“ on vanity; a venerable Matron on  
“ a simple Girle. The scope of my  
“ journey is to attend you, to lend  
“ you my strength, now your own  
“ failes you, and to serve you  
“ through all the offices of your  
“ Hand-maid. Doe but intimate  
“ your will by the least signe, and  
“ you shall see me flye to performe  
“ it. Your Invention cannot devise  
“ any thing so impossible,  
“ which my will (ambitious to  
“ please you) will not judge most  
“ easie to be executed. Whereas  
“ you intreat me to stay long with  
“ you,

lig. you, you transgresse the Lawes of  
ou, Friendship in petitioning her  
ffer, whom you may justly and bold-  
our, ly command. A thing strange to  
vere, me it is, that you should thinke  
vai, me so stupid and sencelesse, as  
ome, that I should need an invitation to  
on, be made truely happy. Before I  
my, had the honour to see you, I envi-  
end, ed those that enjoyed your sweet  
wne, and divine conversation, and  
you, thought they enrich themselves  
our, with my losse; wherefore a staffe  
nate, to beat me hence is more requi-  
and, site, than Oratory to keepe mee  
rme, here. Ever since the blessed An-  
de, gell imparted to me the newes of  
ble, your being fruitfull, my desire to  
s to, see you hath beene restlesse, and  
nost, next to God I have onely medita-  
reas, ted you and your goodnesse. O  
vith, my best Cousin! whose fervent  
you, and

“ and devout prayers obtaine victo-  
 “ ries, whose Fasts abundance, joye  
 “ with me in thanksgiving to God  
 “ for the grace which I shall never  
 “ be able to conceive, much lesse to  
 “ expresse or deserve. Him with all  
 “ my heart and with all my soule  
 “ invoke, that blessings may fall  
 “ upon you before, and above your  
 “ wishes, and that you may yet  
 “ long live to his glory, and my  
 “ Comfort.

Had their three months demean-  
 our each to other, together with  
 their godly discourse, and pious  
 practise of it, beene penn'd to po-  
 sterity (had all other Bookes been  
 burnt save that and the Bible) the  
 Femall sexe in these two should  
 have found matter ample enough  
 to exercise both their Meditation  
 and



and action. Sure I am the Romish Church, as in an honourable memoriall of this their Charitable Encounter, hath ordained the Annuall Celebration of a solemne Feast. And the Councell of *Basil* (of what authoritie in other things I know not certainly in this one particular very commendable) hath decreed the solemnization of this Festivall day in these verie words.

*Sess. 43.  
Concil.  
Basileen.*

*The Blessed Virgin being instructed by the celestiall Messenger, and conducted by the Holy Ghost, ascended in haste the mountainous Countrey, and entered the humble house of Zachary. For I E S U S who was in her wombe, made haste to blesse Iohn as yet in his Mothers Belly. And the most glorious Virgin visiting her Cousen Elizabeth, was pleasing to her both in her loving*

loving visitation, and fruitfull Colloquie. The Consideration of this Excelling Mystery ought to delight the mindes of the Faithfull, wherein these two glorious Mothers (who bore about them the comencement and accomplishment of our Salvation) did so familiarly communicate their joyes, and wherein the most excellent Virgin Mary of the House of David, and Elizabeth the most venerable amongst the Daughters of Aaron discours'd together. The first of these had inclined in her wombe the Creatour and Redeemer of us all, the latter his Forerunner. These Saints being made Mothers by a Miracle conferr'd together of the Divine benefits they had received. The meeting of this worthy paire was most happie, and illustrated with great, and glorious testimonies of the divine Grace. The one conceived by

the

## *The life of the Virgin MARY. 127*

Col. the cooperation of the holy Spirit, the  
Ex. nber by Myracle in her old Age, and  
the both their issues foretold by the celesti-  
these all Angell. Iohn as yet imprisoned in  
about his Mothers wombe doth worship his  
om. Lord borne to him in Maries Belly;  
of fa. and Elizabeth fill'd with the Holy  
and Ghost doth congratulate the Concepti-  
gin on of the Sonne of God, and the Savi-  
of E. or of Mankinde, and prophecying  
ngt declares her Cousen blessed in belee-  
rs d ving, and contemplating the myste-  
clo. ries revealed to her. On the other side  
and Mary full of unutterable joy, layed up  
ore. all these sayings in her heart, which  
Mo. before she had heard from the Angel,  
ther and now from Elizabeth, and breaks  
ceci out into a Song of Thanksgiving to  
aire the Lord. Who can sufficiently praise  
with so great Mysteries? Who can declare  
the those joyes to the full? Iohn not yet  
by borne rejoyceth, Elizabeth is delight-  
the ed

*ed with the arrivall of the Virgin. Mary is extreemely pleased in the Mysteries, the Saviour of the world is acknowledged by his Fore-runner, not onely the Angels, but Heaven and Earth resent the pleasure, and the whole Trinitie is glorified with new praises. Wherefore the greatnesse of these joyes is to be extolled with especiall commendations, and with singular solemnities to be celebrated, and the Lord in the wombe, the Virgin that beares him, the barren that conceives, and the Fore-runner that is sanctified ought to be presented with all imaginable praises and honours.*

With this pious and gratefull ordinance of the Church I conclude the visitation of our incomparable Lady, and now proceed to her Deliverie.

We

We reade in holy Writ of three *Her delivery.*  
supernaturall Productions, the one  
of *Adam*, the other of *Eve*, the last  
of *Christ*, which as most miracu-  
lous we are now to treat of. Here  
in his *Nativitie*, as before in his  
*Conception*, let us turne *Inquisition*  
into *thanksgiving*, and with one  
spirit and voyce sing aloud, *The* *Pf. 118.*  
*stone which the Builders refused is the* *22.*  
*head of the corner. This was the Lords*  
*doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*  
*This is the day which the Lord hath*  
*made, let us rejoyce, and be glad in it.*  
This is our wedding-day, wherein  
by the Sonne we are joyned to the  
Father. This is the day of the new  
union, wherein he who is God re-  
maineth the same that he was, yet  
for our sakes is borne, and made  
what he was not; wherein he that

K

was

was every where without a Body, is made present to us by a Body, that what God hath by *Nature*, men might receive by *Grace*. This is a great, a joyfull, a fortunate, a desired day, the end of the Law, the end of the *Prophets*, the beginning of the Gospell, nay the Gospell it selfe. This is a day of State, usher'd by the Angels, follow'd by the Apostles. Let our Mindes remove the distance of Time and place, and dwell a while with our all-holy-Lord and blessed Lady, lest we loose the pleasure of this day, the least Accident whereof is Mysterious. What a brave assembly of Visitants of all Conditions resorted this day to this place, which then might rightly be called the Randevous of the Saints? Would you see those who are above

bove men, but below him who is borne? Behold the Angels singing his birth. Do you desire to behold the married? Here you have *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*. The unmarried? Here you have *Symeon*. Widdows? Here you have *Anna*. Priests? Here againe you have *Zachary*. Wise men? Here you have them from the East. Idcots? You have here the Shepherds. But here is to be noted, that these keepers of Beasts heare the voyce of the Angels before any of the other, first receive the Gospell, and first divulge it. And in this they were more happie then *Augustus* himselfe, who (though he had made a firme Peace by Sea and Land, and had now the third time shut up the Temple of *Ianus*) yet was he ignorant of the blessed

Peace concluded on betwixt God and Man. O how much sometimes Ignorance avails in Divine matters! Kings, Potentates, the Rulers of the Earth, and the wise of this world are asleepe while Christ is borne. These most simple of Mortals, and innocent as the creatures they tend, watch all night, and therefore are first made partakers of these joyfull news. As their owne wooll not yet dipt in any dye readily drinks in any colour they please to bestow on it: So their minds voyd of all humane wisedome, greedily suckt in the Divine; Faith is the *Compendium* of Salvation, and humane knowledge of times the obstacle of Faith. *Aristotle* having confined to Heaven, the Maker, and Moover of it, would never have beleev'd  
his



his birth here below. *Plato* would have derided this miraculous relation, who the more he attributed to God, the lesse would he have expected his so humble comming into the world. Neither would the Stoicks who held God to be a fire, nor *Hipocrates* who thought him to be a warm'th, ever have look't for him clad in flesh and bloud. Wherefore they are here elected witnesses of this strange truth, whose Science was of ability strongly to beleeve, not wittily to dispute. O what proficient in Faith did these rusticall Swaines prove in a moment ! What a profound secret is imparted to them? Let us examine the verity of this by that infallible Touch-stone, the text. *And there were in the same Country, Shepheards abiding in the field,*

& keeping watch by night, because of their flocke, and loe the Angell of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone about them, and they were sore afraid. Then the Angell said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold I bring you tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people: That is, that unto you is borne this day a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a signe unto you; you shall finde the Childe swadled and layd in a Cratch. And straight way there was with the Angell a multitude of heavenly Souldiers, praying God, and saying; Glory be to God in the high Heaven, and Peace on Earth, and towards men good will. And it came to passe that when the Angels were gone away from thence into Heaven, that the Shepheards said one to another; Let us goe then unto Beth-

Bethlem, and see this thing that is come to passe, which the Lord hath shewed unto us; so they came with haste, and found both Mary and Ioseph with the Babe layd in the Cratch. And when they had seene it, they publisht abroad the thing that was told them of that Childe.

Here three things especially are remarkable:

First, their forwardnesse in believing:

Secondly, the speed they made to see what they had believed, and

Thirdly, to publish what they had seene.

That they quickly believed, appears by the haste they made to see. They no sooner saw him, but they found him to be the King of Israell indeed, yet withall to be a

Shepherd. They instantly discerned this to be the Shepherd, who was to lay downe his life for his flocke. The Prince of all Shepherds whose sheepe-fold is the world: The Shepherd that was to seperate the Goates from the Sheepe. They discover'd this to be the immaculate Lambe that was to take away the sinnes of the world. They disclos'd this Lamb to be the greatest Lyon of the Tribe of *Iudah*. Whom now they looke on in the Cratch, Saint *Iohn* shall hereafter behold on his Throne. These men in whom there was no guile as they could not deceive others, so they could not in this be deceiv'd. They needed not suspect any fallacy, and therefore might safely relate this divine wonder to all they met.

The

The second witnesses of this Miracle are the Wise men. After God had laid open the Treasure of his divine secrets to Idiots, he shewes them also to the wise. It seemes the Earth at this time was become the Booke of Gods greatest Mysteries, and Heaven the Index. In this they finde the Star of this King of the Iewes, which (having beene before the declarer of his Nativity) they now make their guide in their journey. The Starre performing this duty to its Creator, at length brings them to *Bethlem*, where they view him in the Cratch, whose Nativity before they had found in the Heavens. To him they doe Homage, tender adoration, and pay Tribute, and opening their Treasures,

fures, make him an oblation of Gold, Incense, and Mirrhe. Whom before they had in vaine sought in the Heavens, they now finde on the earth, and in the most forded part of it, a Stable, full of severall stinkes; where he (to whom none are worthy to be servants) had two dull Beasts for his Companions.

*Returne now you Sonnes of wisdom to your owne home, by much more learned, by more than much more happy than when you set out. Heaven is now set open to you, which before your unbelieve kept shut against you. If you be Chaldeans or Persians, or both, spreade throughout those Nations the fame of that which you have scene. Publish in all places this the greatest mystery of Piety, which*

which God is onely able to produce,  
onely faith can apprehend. Of all  
creatures to man onely belongs the  
gift of Reason, by the rule whereof he  
measures all things. But doe not you  
be so, lest you fall not onely into an  
incomparable, but a damnable error.  
Follow you the instruction of Faith,  
and where ere you come with a holy  
tride, proclaime that God is manife-  
sted in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,  
scene by Angels, reveal'd to Shep-  
herds, found out and ador'd by you  
your selves, and hereafter to be as-  
sum'd, and to sit in glory farre above  
those starres you daily read. Goe, and  
give out that there is nothing greater  
in Heaven, than what you have found  
in a Stable. Yet ere you depart, con-  
vincce the stiffe-necked Jewes of their  
lofty, but grosse error, in diligently  
seeking to know God in that part  
wherein

\* The Jews when ever it lighteth, set open their windowes : for they hold their Saviour shall come in lighting. On this reade Buxdorffius.

wherein he will lye hid, and in taking no notice of him in that part wherein he would be knowne : in looking for Saviour from <sup>\*</sup> Heaven, who is already borne on earth. Yet now I consider their obstinacy better, I wish you to spare your here fruitlesse advice : for the eares of this wicked generation is stopped, their hearts obdurate, and they are as fully resolved to goe on in their wickednesse, as you in your journey.

Having proved his Nativity by these holy Testators, let us now enter our selves, and view this pretty one in his narrow lodging, lay our selves prostrate before



before him, worship him, and re-  
create our selues with the lovely  
object. And that our delight may  
be the greater, let us first behold  
him, and his sweetest Mother a  
part, and then both together. But  
let us here shut out the Pharisees,  
and barre them the sight of this  
Heavenly Infant, who urge the  
Law, and reject him the Author  
of it. Let us exclude the Arrians,  
who deny his coequalitie with the  
Father, and the Sabellians who  
confound the Trinitie, of which  
is distinctly one, and hold that  
there is in it one Essence, and one  
person: and the Samosatensians,  
who derogate from his Nature,  
and avouch the Word (which tru-  
ly he is) to be no other then a va-  
ging sound. Nor let us onely  
stepe out these, but the whole  
swarme

swarme also of Atheists, and Hereticks. Let the Philosophers too stay without, who not so impious, yet more ignorant, cannot dive to the bottome of this Mystery. But to all those who are honour'd in the assumption and profession of his glorious Name a free access is granted. Enter then you little flock, you few whom his Father hath bestowed on him, and see him, who when he gave the Law appeared in Fire, now he offers Grace involv'd in Hay. Yet in this dejected posture, in this course manner while he lay, he wanted not a whole Army of Angelicall spirits that declar'd his Birth to Men, and they who had before chanted his praises as he sat in Glory, now sing his goodnesse lying in the Cratch. Though he have

shoomely rooffe over his head,  
the East observes his approach.  
Though the poverty of his Hu-  
manitie obscures his Deity, the  
Starres in Heaven make it known.  
Behold him who came humble to  
the humble, for the humble, and  
yet his humility is above all subli-  
mity. Reverently and intently  
look on him who descended from  
Heaven to Earth, who came to  
you, into you, who is borne in the  
night, borne in the midst of Win-  
ter, and borne (after the wretch-  
ed humane condition) naked, and  
none offer him assistance. Swad-  
ding clothes are wanting, some  
ragges are found out, a Cradle is  
missing, a Manger is at hand.

*Here he cryes to you, and holds up  
his pretty hands to Heaven, which he  
calls*

*cals to witnesse that he can humble himselfe no lower. Can you view this humble, this mercifull spectacle, and not weepe your selues into marble? O speedily put on sackcloth! besprinkle your selues with Ashes, kneele downe in the dust and dung under the Manger where your Lord lyes, knock your selues on the bosomes, fetch sighs and grones from the bottom of your hearts, repay him the teares he lent you, and by your sad gesture and deportment demonstrate how much you are bound to him who suffered for you even in his Birth.*

Having seene the Soane, now stedfastly place your eyes upon the Mother. Behold the unpolluted Mayd (a great part of the wonder) sitting neare the Manger, being voyd of all lust, chaste in Soule  
and

and Body, who doth now confesse that of which she is not capable without a miracle, to wit, that she is a Mother, and with fixed eyes expressing now joy, now admiration, sees her selfe wedded to Heaven. She beholds her selfe a Mother deliver'd of her Parent, a handmaid of her King, and Master. She to her astonishment finds that she hath brought forth an issue more mighty then *David*, more ancient then *Adam*. And now she feeles the tender, and ardent affection of a Mother, but the old love she hath borne her virginity gives it an allay. Here the Mother, the Midwife, and the Nurse are one and the same, lest any thing lesse pure should handle him then her who brought him forth. And now she nurfeth this Heavenly in-

I,

fant

fant with her pure milke, which flows from no mortall lust, but from the Celestiall Grace. Her breasts white as their owne milke pressed by her delicate fingers, as white as either, he softly pats, and playes with. Sometimes he repaires to them for sport, sometimes for necessity, and he who feeds all things else draws thence his nourishment. He casteth up now one eye, now the other, and with a pleasing looke gives her a sweet smile, not unlike to that which *Zephrus* imprints on the cheeke of the Rose. She returnes him another, and her infinite, but chaste, affection she divides betweene her Sonne, and her virginity. And now her extasie being a little over, she cals to minde that she hath often read her owne story  
fore.

fore-told by the Prophets, *That a Virgin should bring forth a Sonne.*

*Fly, O fly farre hence you Monsters  
women, who carry leprous soules in  
polluted bodies, and have not one ver-  
ue to rescue you from the Legion of  
our vices. Depart hence you who are  
laves to Lust, whose fetters you have  
borne so long, that they have made a  
depe impression in your mindes. You  
who have spent your time in the  
Church after alluring dressees, and in  
common dalliance shall have no en-  
uice here. You who have received  
with delight one warme Masculine  
kisse, shall here be excluded. Nay you  
who have had onely one unchaste  
thought, shall not here be admitted,  
without being prepared by a cleansing  
arty Repentance. This is the lodging  
of Purity, into which nothing must*

come that is uncleane. But you whose  
 chaste eyes have never sent out lust-  
 full beames, nor received them in,  
 whose Bosomes have beene of prooffe  
 against the fierce assaults and Batta-  
 ries of Temptation, you are so farre  
 from being forbidden to come here,  
 that you are earnestly invited hither.  
 You who have lived spirituall Amou-  
 rists, whose spirits have triumphed  
 over the Flesh, on whose Cheeks Soli-  
 tude, Prayers, Fasts, and Austerity  
 have left an amiable pale: You who  
 ply your sacred Arithmeticke, and  
 have thoughts cold, and cleare as the  
 Christall beads you pray by: You who  
 have vow'd virginity mentall, and  
 corporall, you shall not onely have in-  
 gresse here, but welcome. Approach  
 with Comfort, and kneele downe be-  
 fore the Grand white Immaculate  
 Abbesse of your snowy Nunneries, and  
 present



## *The life of the Virgin MARY.* 149

represent the all-saving Babe in her  
Arms with due veneration. Never  
thinke more of the Facunditie of  
Wedlocke, since you see here that  
God himselfe is the fruit of Virginity.  
You who have tyed your selves in ho-  
bonds, from which you wish never  
but by death to be freed, who have  
rather lawfully to yeeld to the  
rebellious desires of the flesh, than un-  
lawfully to subdue them: you who in  
fidelity and simplicity of life have  
strictly imitated Christ and his  
Spouse: you whose Fertility is blessed,  
not onely in preserving and propaga-  
ting the humane Race, but in augmen-  
ting also the number of the Saints in  
Heaven, to you a free and open access  
is given. You widdowed Turtles,  
who have lost your Mates, and either  
have vowed never to match againe,  
or pray'd to God that when you doe, it

may be to his glory; you also shall have admittance. Virgins, Wives, and Widdowes, ioyne hands, and encircle this the most perfect paire that ever graced the earth: Behold to your astonishment, and also to your consolation a milde and gentle Maide, in whom neither Childe-birth defaceth Virginitie, nor Virginitie fruitfulnessse. Feed your eyes with the sight of her whose minde is a Paradise without a Serpent, on whose lookes, words, and actions, Modesty is a diligent attender. And now in Peace doe you depart too, but take this charitable Admonition along wth you, that (in emulation of this your dearest Mistresse) you lay up all her graces and perfecti-  
ons in your hearts, and withall continually meditate her patience, which contented it selfe with bad lodging, and worse accommodation, the sad  
re-

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hall remembrance whereof hath made me  
ves, ever since I read this passage, not to  
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22 And when the dayes of her Purification, according to the Law of Moses were accomplished they brought him to Hierusalem, to present him to the Lord :

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Having waited on her in her Delivery, we will now attend her to her Purification. This day (the celebration whereof is instituted by the Church) is called *Candle-masse*, as much as to say, the *Day of Lights*, on which (while Masse was singing) very many Tapers were burning in the Church. The Lustration of houses was yearly usuall with the Romans in the month of February, from whence this custome in the Church is derived. *Innocentius* thus propounds and solves the Question. *What is the reason, saith he, that on this Holy day we use so many Lights in the Church? The cause of this institution is two-fold. The first is, that a Heathenish custome may be converted into a Christian Right or Ordinance, and that*

*Her Purification.*

In serm.  
de Purif.  
B. Mar.  
Virg.

*that which was performed by superstitious Idolaters in honour of Ceres and Proserpina, may be turned into the praise and glory of the Virgin Mary. The second is, that they who by Grace are purified, by this Ceremony may be admonished to imitate those prudent Virgins, who (as the Evangelicall Parable testifieth) came not without their Tapers lighted to the Nuptials of Christ their Spouse. This day the Church used to pray, that as the visible Lights chased away the darknesse of the night: so the hearts of the Faithfull might be illuminated by the Invisible flames of the holy Spirit, & (being cured of their blindnesse brought upon them by vice) might with pure and cleare eyes discern those things which are pleasing to God, and necessary to their salvation;*

tion; and having pass'd through the sad, darke, and dismall accidents of this world, might at length arrive at Heaven, where they shall behold, and enjoy a Light everlasting. This day is not onely made Holy by the Purification of the Mother, but by the oblation also and presentation of the Sonne, of whom, as of the mere worthy, we must first discourse.

It was truely a great abasing of the Sonne of God (for which by the Prophets he was styled a Servant) who being not a debtor to the Law, but the Lord of it, and the onely First-borne free from sinne, yet endured and underwent with other Children, both the Iewish Circumcision and oblation, and at once publikely honour'd

nour'd his Fathers house, and (to use the Prophets phrase) fill'd it with glory. There offer'd by the Virgin hands of his Mother, he was to his Father a most pleasing oblation, being the end of the Law, and all the antient Sacrifices. Neither was the longing of *Simeon* and *Anna* onely satisfied with his aspect, but the ardent wishes also of many others, in whose mindes the old sparke of Faith now burst out into new and bright flames, which did not onely illuminate their owne, but other Bosomes also. Not a few, questionlesse, at *Hierusalem*, markt this day with a white stone, and did celebrate it with joy and thanksgiving, in that the Light foretold by *Esay* then arose, and comforted all those to whom the shine and warmth



to it he ne g ne s. e- h s e n t -  
warmth of it extended. *Israel* had never seene her *Messias*, till then when she had free leave to kisse, embrace, and dandle him in her Armes, and therefore her joy must of necessity be more than ordinary. Yet some of her inhabitants were deafe, and could not heare the Prophets proclaime his comming; others were blinde, and could not discerne him being come, nor were sensible at all of the Honour they received in the venerable presence of him, and his incomparable Mother.

I now come to our sweetest Lady, the time of whose Lying in being expired, she sets forward to the Temple. I have read some who poetically set downe her going thither, and compare her to

*Auro-*

*Aurora*, whom the Poets describe sitting in a golden Chariot drawn by a *Pegasus*, her yellow haire spread over her milky shoulders, with a Torch in her hand enlightning this inferiour world. For my owne part (though of all humane studies I am most taken with Poesy) yet both by Nature and Grace I abhorre to write of things divine in the stile of the stage. But this Religion and modesty will license me to averre, That when she went to be Purified, she was in all things the very figure and resemblance of Sanctity it selfe. No doubt but she was accompanied with a Beavy of Shee-Saints, of which she was the Chorus. Neither was *Joseph* absent, who as before he had beene a guardiant of her, and her Infant in her Delivery when he

was

was not capable of the Miracle;  
So now he is altogether incapable  
of his owne Felicity in attending  
his fairest Mate, and dearest Ma-  
ster to the holy Temple. And  
who doubts but this blessed one  
joy'd more in this Journey than  
*Ioseph* or any other. Saint *Iohn* and  
Saint *Luke* testifie that it was a re-  
ligious custome amongst the very  
Heathen from remote places to  
come to *Hierusalem*, and in the  
Temple thereof to performe their  
devotions. Doe you thinke this  
pious Maide can be out-strip-  
ped in the performance of a holy  
duty by the Gentiles? Can you  
imagine she could neglect and  
loose the occasion of time and  
place offered her, to commend to  
her Maker in her best words the  
vowes and prayers of her prepa-  
red

*Iohn* 12.  
*Acts* 2.8

Her  
Humili-  
ty.

red heart? She came to *Hierusalem* (for certainly she dwelt not there) with farre greater speed and joy, questionlesse, than to her Cousins house, this being a businesse that much more concern'd her, in that she was by more and stronger tyes bound to serve God than *Elizabeth*. And hereby the way we must not omit her Humility and Charity. Of the first whereof we have a cleere demonstration in this, That what other women did out of feare of the Law, she was perswaded by a perfect faith, and an humble obedience to performe. For that her Purification was necessary, I beleeve no man will affirme, unlesse in this sense, That the Rites and Ceremonies imposed on the purified by *Moses*, were with decency

decency to be observed by her who had borne him that came to fulfill, not to destroy the Law. She could not be maculated in conceiving, because she knew no man, nor in bearing, by reason it was without a man. Why should she be solicitous to redeeme her Sonne, who was himselfe the Redeemer of the world? This was assuredly an act produced by her Humility, as was also her refusing the company of the rich, and her associating the poore and needy, though most impure, and abject. And she her selfe was so penurious, that she had not wherewithall to buy a Lambe, whereof to make oblation. Whereas the Rich hide and hould up their wealth, she drawes forth the \* Treasure brought her by the Wise men,  
M and

*Her  
charity.  
\* This is  
the ob-  
servati-  
on of  
Dainmi-  
anus,  
Dam-  
matcen,  
& many  
more.*

and with alacrity distributes it amongst those whose wants required it: yet was part of the present gold, which upon charitable uses surely was consumed; for her Frugality and Temperancy were such, that in so short a time she could not possibly have spent the value of it. But these perfections are not to be wondred at in her, who being a Doctresse, scorn'd not to be a Disciple, and strongly to endeavour the attaining even to those vertues which by Nature were innate, and by Grace engrafted in her. Ravisht in soule with these her Excellencies, me thinkes I see her Majestically pacing on to the Temple, and heare her thus speake to those who accompanied and met her on the way.

*My deare friends, Sisters, and fellow servants, I have ever desir'd and endeavour'd (as neare as Humane frailtie will give me leave) to imitate my sweetest Sonne, whose profound Humility and perfect obedience can never sufficiently be extolled. Full well he knew Humility to make the first step to eternall life; Obedience the second; the former of which to teach all men he descended from Heaven, the latter to demonstrate, he became obedient to his Father, even to the suffering of the cursed death of the Crosse. Would you see me a Proficient in both these supernaturall vertues? Behold me who am unpolluted, (as not having conceived by humane meanes) going like one vitious, and impure to be purified. I who am free from the observation of the Mosaicall*

*Lawes and Ceremonies, have subjected my selfe to them. I who am voyd of all wilfull sinne, willingly goe amongst other sinfull and uncleane women, that I may be to all an Example of Charity and Humility, to none a president of ruine. I thought it not enough that my fruitfull Virginity had produced Salvation to the world, unlesse by Example also I taught how this Grace (applicable to all, applied but to a few) by you also might be obtained. This is my way to the attaine-ment of celestiaall glory, and let it be yours to purchase your selves eternall salvation. Doe thus, live thus, that you may shine holy Tapers in Gods militarie Church, and glorious Stars in his Triumphant.*

She with her devout traine being come into the Temple offer'd  
her



her gift to the Priest, and received a prophetick Benediction from *Symeon*. Whether this old man were a Priest, or a Layman, I will not here dispute; certainly he was a man blessed above all the Patriarchs and Prophets, in that he saw God face to face, and may be styled the most profound of all Divines, who (being the last just man of the Law, the first of Grace, a Jew by Religion, in Thanksgiving a Christian) comprehended so many Mysteries in so few words. This holy Man (the Scribes and Pharisees dreaming on no such matter) had long since seene his Saviour comming, whom he no sooner saw borne into the Temple by his mother (who then resembled Modesty supporting sanctity) but he snatcht this prettie

Timoth.  
presb.  
iero.  
sol. in  
orat. de  
Prophe-  
ta Syme-  
one.

Babe out of her Armes into his owne, and not able to containe his joy, in a divine Rapture Swanne-like (his death being then at hand) sung this his sweetest Ditty. *Lord now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace : for mine eyes have seene thy Salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all Nations, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and to the glory of thy people Israel. And he blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this Childe is appointed for the fall and rising againe of many in Israel, and for a signe which shall be spoken against, yea and a sword shall passe through thy Soule, that the thoughts of many hearts may be opened. And Anna a Prophetesse confessed the same to all those who looked for the Redemption of Israel.*

*Luke 2.* If the viewing and embracing of  
Christ

Christ so dilated the spirits of the old mans heart, and made him so sensible of this his great felicitie, that he would expect here no greater, but desired rather a dissolution then the fruition of any thing else on earth, What may we judge her content to be, who conceiv'd, bore, brought forth, and brought him up? Whose affectionate looks, kisses, and embraces he had by day, the two later of which the night it selfe could not barre him of. Her greatest detractors surely cannot imagine her so stupid as not to be apprehensive of the delight, the Comfort, the happinessse, the honour his presence did impart, nor so unthankfull as not to acknowledge, and to her power expresse her gratitude. Certainly her soule was in a hea-

venly Trance when she contemplated the grace and felicity she had in Gods owne house, and before an Assembly of his elected people to acknowledge her gratitude for the inestimable benefits he had vouchsafed her, but especially for this, that in his glorious eyes she seem'd worthy (though in her selfe undeserving) in her owne name, and that of his chosen to present him with such a sacrifice, such a gift as exceedingly surpassed in excellency, all Hosts, Sacrifices, and Sacraments whatsoever, being indeed, their onely scope and end. *Anna* the Mother of *Samuel* is praised for her diligence in Prayer, the fruit whereof she reaped in her despair'd of Fertility. And of our admired Virgin, we read that she carefully

ly frequented the Temple, of which (being wise) she knew the institution, and (being pious) the custome, which she most religiously observed. Wherefore this day of her Purification, and at all times else, without all peradventure, she much excelled *Anna*, and her whole sexe in the fervency of her Orisons, in the ardency of her love, in purity, and sublimity of minde, in holinesse of life, and divine contemplation. We may boldly conclude that she pour'd out her prayers here in greater abundance than she did in *Zacharies* house, where she could not suppress the flame of her zeale from breaking out into the praise of God her Saviour, in whom she rejoyced. To this effect, happily, here she pray'd.

O eternall and gracious God! I am  
below other women in merit, but a-  
bove them all indebted to thy Supreme  
Maieſty, for making me the Taber-  
nacle of thy onely Sonne, the Temple  
of thy Spirit, and for this ſpeciall ho-  
nour done mee in the Temple of thy  
Service, the congregation whereof  
makes me the onely point wherein the  
lines of their affection, and admira-  
tion doe meete. If women be reſpected  
for their fertillity, needs muſt I be in  
great eſteeme with all men, who (by  
thy eternall Predeſtination, and fa-  
therly providence) have brought  
forth thy onely Sonne, their Redee-  
mer. With a bowed heart, and ben-  
ded knees I acknowledge that thou  
haſt faithfully and mercifully fulfilled  
all thoſe thy favourable promiſes  
made me by thy Angell Gabriel, my  
Cousin

Cousin Elizabeth, and thy holy Pro-  
phets. Thou who can'st neither de-  
ceive, nor be deceived, hast made me  
the vertue of thy Spirit operating)  
Mother, my virginall integrity still  
reserved. That long long'd for E-  
manuel, (than whom nothing grea-  
ter, or better could be given by thee,  
or taken my me) I have at length pro-  
b'd to save all those that beleve in  
him. This magnificent immense, in-  
exhaustible, unvaluable Treasure,  
this beloved Sonne of thine in whom  
thou art well pleased; This Saint of  
Saints, by whom all things in Hea-  
ven and Earth, are re-establisht, this  
Saviour of the world I here present to  
thee, as a gift most acceptable in thy  
sight. He whom all Nations, and the  
Fathers themselves have so much  
thirsted to see: The Angell of the new  
Testament, the seed of Abraham,  
the

*the sonne of David, the King of Israel, in whom all generations are blessed, the Lord of the Temple is here come to illustrate his owne house. O mercifull Father! open the eyes of the dimme sighted Israerites, that they may see the glorious Light that now shines on them, and not onely acknowledge, but worship their Messias, and imbrace him in their hearts, as I doe in mine Armes. Neither let the Rayes of this new borne starre reflect onely on them, but on all those also, who sit in darkenesse, and the shadow of death, that to them it may restore life and lustre. So shall they acknowledge thee, and him whom thou hast sent, CHRIST IESVS, and be made spirituall dwellings for thee to reside in, there to receive due thanks and praise for ever and ever.*



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Be.

Betweene her Purification, and  
passion of her Sonne, she is not of-  
mentioned in holy Writ, but  
when she is, it is still to her praise  
and honour: As when her care for  
the poor made her petition Christ  
Wine to revive, and refresh  
their drooping, fainting Spirits;  
and when she said to him, *Why  
have you us'd us thus - your Father  
and I have beene to seeke you.*  
Whence all women may learne  
humility, motherly care, and con-  
fidentall Faith. She who was without  
blemish, as being Gods owne Mo-  
ther, whose chaste bosome no car-  
nall thought had ever entred, who  
lookt on all men with the same in-  
nocency & simplicity with which  
she beheld Statues, deigned to call  
a poor rustical labouring man Hus-  
band,

*Her  
charity.*

*Her motherly  
care, together  
with her  
coningal  
Faith  
and obedience.*

band, from whose deare company, no flight, terrour, travaile, no paines could separate her. But what the Scripture omitteth, may be supplied by our charitable imagination, which cannot but conceive all those her Actions buried in silence, to have beene of the same pure thred with the rest of her life. The truth of which we finde confirm'd in her perseverance in goodnesse, even to her sonnes end, and her owne.

*Her demeanour  
at her  
Sonnes  
death.*

*At his death wee reade she was present, and there stood (saith the Evangelist) by the Crosse of Christ his Mother and her Sister Mary Cleopha and Mary Magdalen. When therefore Iesus saw his Mother, and his beloved Disciple standing by, he said to his Mother, Woman, behold thy Sonne*

and he said to his Disciple, Behold thy Mother, and from that time he tooke her for his. His pardoning of the Thiefe is not a greater argument of his Mercy, than his taking care for his Mother was of his Piety. He gives Temperancy the custody of Chastity, and commends these to each other who were resolved to live and dye Virgins. Saint Bernard sayes these words of Christ to his Mother, included much bitternesse, for they put her in minde that she was to make a dammageable exchange of Christ for *Iohn*, of the Servant for his Lord, of the Disciple for his Master, of the Sonne of God, for the sonne of *Zebedeus*. And this was the reason (if we give beliefe to *Mantuan*) that he called her Woman, not Mother, lest the very  
sound

found of that deare word should make her more sensible of his approaching losse, and force her into an immoderate grieve. But sorrow was no Noveltie to her for that saying of Christ, *In this world, you shall have affliction*, was in her verified, whose life contained more miseries then minuts, which she patiently underwent, knowing that the more distressed she was here, the more blessed she should be hereafter. And if we shall adde the light of Reason to the Evangelicall Truth, we shall soone perceive that a fatall sadnesse haunted her from the birth of her onely Sonne to his buriall. When she was great with him, and readie to lye downe, the inhumanity of the Bethlemites was such, that they confined her, and the Lord of all things

things to a Stable, and would not supply her with as much as Linnen, a Mantle, and other necessaries wherewithall she might defend her selfe, and her sweet Babe from the moysture of the night, the sharpenesse of the winter, and other intollerable inconveniences. When her Childe was eight daies old, she saw him loose bloud in his Circumcision, which her divining soule misgave her to be a Type of the deare remainder he was to shed. Then againe her minde was infinitely vexed for the butchery of those guiltlesse Children which were murdered for the sake of her owne innocent Infant; of the sorrow and miserie of whose Mothers, her tender compassionating heart was a most competent Iudge. From this  
N                      bloody

*\*Vernulæus saies  
that those who  
flye from danger,  
travaile most by  
night, and there-  
fore it is likely our  
blessed Lady did  
so.*

bloudy Massacre to save  
her Saviour, she was con-  
strained ( without taking  
leave of her friends, or dis-  
posing of what was hers)  
to take her flight with him,  
& through danger, \* dark-  
nesse, and horreur, to  
make her way into Ægypt.  
When he was twelve  
yeeres old, she lost him,  
an Accident more grie-  
vous than any of the for-  
mer; for heretofore her  
study had been to preserve  
what she had, now her care  
was to finde what she had  
not. What an Agony her  
soule suffer'd at the lamen-  
table tydings of the behea-  
ding of her Sonnes Fore-  
runner, I leave to the con-  
sidera-

sideration of all thankfull soules; for she could not without being stayned with ingratitude, but mourne for his absence and violent departure out of the world, who had received so much joy at her presence before he came into it. But above all these, the unequalld Treacherie of *Iudas*, who deliver'd this Lambe of God, as a prey to these Wolves; the infidelity of his other Disciples, the malignity of his Iudges, the cruelty of his Executioners conspir'd to make her miserable. Nor is it unlikely that she bewailed the ingratitude, the obstinacy and impiety of her Nation, who revild him that blessed them, and tortur'd him who came to save them. With what amazement and sadness was her heart surpris'd think

N 2

ye.

ye, when the newes came of her Sonnes being apprehended? But when she saw him forsaken by his friends, bound by his enemies, accused before the high Priests, derided by *Herod*, despis'd by the people; scourg'd, and tortur'd by the command of *Pilate*, his body trembling, torne, and pierced, besmear'd with his owne bloud, and hung between two Theeves; then, and never till then did the Sword foretold by *Simeon*, passe through her Soule. *Luther* saies this Prophecy of *Simcon* was spoken to her, not to *Ioseph*; for on her alone the whole weight of sorrow was to be laid. True it is that many differ about the interpretation of this Sword. To cleare all doubts, we must take notice that the holy Scriptures mention foure sorts of Swords.

The



The first is a Corporall, or materiall sword, and of this Christ speakes to Peter, *All that use the Sword, shall perish with the Sword.*

The second is a spirituall Sword, of which Saint *Paul* makes mention, when he saies, *Receive the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

The third is a Sword of Scandall or Ambiguity, with which the Apostles themselves were stricken, when they forsooke their Master.

The fourth is the Sword of Griefe or Tribulation. With this the Prophet *David* averres the Soule of *Ioseph* to have beene pierc'd

*Psal. 33.*  
*Pf. 105.*  
*Gen. 37.*

pierc'd when his death was plotted first by his trecherous Brothers, next by his incontinent Mistresse.

That this Sword whereof *Simeon* Prophecied, could be no materiall one, is evident, in that we read not of any violent death she suffered. That it could not be the sword of the Spirit, is manifest; for the word of God was her daily delitious food at the same time when *Simeon* made this Prophecy. *Origen* indeed will have it to be the sword of Ambiguity or Infidelity: which erroneous opinion of his, is refuted by many great Fathers of the antient Church, and by *Franciscus Lumbertus*, an accute Protestant Doctor of the moderne in these words. *Those*

In expo-  
sit. E-  
vang.  
Lucæ  
cap. 2.

*saith*

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*saith he, who will have this to be the sword of Infidelity, are not to be hearkened to; for (besides that they can produce no prooffe of this their opinion) it is contradictory to the Text, most rash, and most untrue. How can it be that the sword of Infidelity should penetrate the brest of Gods sacred Mother, into which, infidelity never made the least impression. From the beginning, her Faith was most firme and intire. Let therefore those Blasphemies and wicked slanders of carnall men be put to silence. I will attribute nothing to the blessed Virgin, but what I reade in the holy Writ, where she is pronounced blessed, because shee beleev'd. We have many testimonies of her Faith, but of her Infidelity not one word is extant in the sacred Scriptures. Yet this prophane assertion is not a whit strange, or to be*

*Her passive Fortitude, and Patience at the Death of her Sonne.*

Melan.in cap.27.  
Matth.

marvelled at in *Origen*, who held that Christ dyed for the Angels, and the Starres, and whose soule was, indeed, no other than a Mynt of Heresies. *Melancton* affirmes, that her sorrow was much asswaged by her Faith, which assured her of his Resurrection. She knew she had borne the Messias, whose blood was to wash away the finnes of the world. Wherefore she might well beamaz'd, distrustfull she could not be at all. The holy Spirit certified her this was not a destroying death, but a triumphing. Her Faith, the oftner it was tryed in the furnace of af-

affliction, the brighter still it shewed. She stood with the affection of a Mother, the passion of a woman, but with the constancy and fortitude of a man, in beholding her owne bloud spilt, her owne flesh rent, and mangled before her face. With an unshaken confidence, and a true internall valour, she beheld his body naked, and scourg'd, his hands and feet nailed to the Crosse: yet sometimes the strings of her relenting, mournfull heart were ready to cracke with the very thought of his cruell tortures and afflictions; but as often againe they were strengthened and comforted with a full assurance that he should overcome them all, and death it selfe. She stood here (her Sonne onely excepted) the prime patterne of a  
sollid

solliid Faith, and constant Patience to all posteritie, in that neither the feare of Tribulation, of persecuti- on, of the wracke, of the scourge, or death it selfe could divide her from her Christ. She committed not that errour most incident to women, many of which gentle sexe perish in the midst of their Lamentations, and will neither admit of Counsell, nor Comfort. She did not teare her haire, scratch her face, batter her bosome, seeke to stifle her selfe, or gave any o- ther desperate signe of a ragefull sorrow, nor did she curse her ene- mies, or make imprecations for Vengeance, or so much as mur- mur against them; but attended the sad event with the same calme- nesse of minde with which this meeke Lambe did his end. Her  
car-

marriage was beyond the Levell of  
Censure, and in all things sutable  
to the modesty and gravity of  
such a Matron. She fear'd not at  
all the fury of the Iewish Souldi-  
ers that environ'd her, but stood  
secure, and fac'd danger. Though  
she was an eye witnesse of his pas-  
sion, and saw his Limbs disten-  
ded, and wrack'd, yet did not the  
evils she saw, wound her so deep  
as those she heard. The Roman  
Fencers used to have Wards, or  
Covers to save their Eares; She  
had greater need of such to barre  
the entrance of blasphemies able  
to provoke God (if his mercies  
were not above all his workes) ut-  
terly to deface Nature, and reduce  
the world to its first Chaos. She  
heard him call'd a Drunkard, a  
Blasphemer, a breaker of the Sab-  
both,

Melan.  
in loco  
prædic.

both, a lover of Publicans and Sinners, nay a very Divell; who was her and Gods onely delight. Yet did not all these killing objects, these impious slanders, drive her into the mercilesse gripes of despaire; for she was confident that the two persons of the Trinity would not forsake the third. *Melancton* commending this dismall story to our sad and serious contemplation, adviseth us, That when Tribulations and Death it selfe come upon us, we should imitate this holy Virgin, who mixed a heart killing sorrow for his death with a joyfull assurance of his Resurrection. *Consider, saith he, what a Conflict the Faith of Mary had. There was in her an extreme griefe linked with Faith and Hope. Let us in our death thus comfort our selves,*



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lives, and harbour the same thoughts with Mary, still fixing on God the Eyes of our Faith. And verily we must beleeve that no small measure of Beliefe was required to temper and assuage so great a \* sorrow. If we conceive that she was so without bowels, as not to grieve for the death and passion of her dearest, and only Sonne: we must withall beleeve with the Maniches, that he had a phantasticke body, not made of his Mothers flesh. No doubt, when (after man had left, and betray'd him) she heard him cry out that God himselfe had forsaken him also, her teares,

\*Sophronius. ser. de Assump. Beata Virg. maintains that she suffered more than all the Martyrs, in that the passion of the minde is greater than that of the body, and shee in soule felt most, because her love to him was above all others.

teares, her sighes, her groanes, her countenance, her very posture, her dolefull voyce, all united their forces to expresse the greatnesse of her sorrow. Listen and you shall heare her thus lament.

*Her Lamentation is also expressed by S. Bernard, Serm. qui incipit, Signum magnum.*

*O my dearest Sonne, that thou who healest others, shouldst thy selfe be wounded! That thou who freest others, shouldst thy selfe be bound! That thou who art the Fountaine of Life, and Creator of the waters, shouldst thy selfe be thirsty! That thou who cloathest all things, shouldst thy selfe stand naked! O my dearest Master, how hast thou trespassed against this obdu-*

*rate*

ate Nation! that it should so thirst  
after thy pretious bloud? Thou woul-  
dest have cover'd them under the  
wings of thy gracious Providence, as  
Henne doth her Chickens, but they  
chose rather to perish, than to come  
thither for shelter. With them the  
dead are more sensible of thy passion,  
than the living, and their devouring  
Sepulchers more mercifull then they  
themselves. O my Sonne, my Sonne,  
that I should see thee suffer, and not  
be able to succour thee! O that I were  
an oblation as spotlesse, and as grati-  
ous in thy Fathers sight, as thou thy  
selfe, that all thy afflictions, all thy  
torments might be mine. Were my  
power correspondent to my will, I  
would rescue thee from Legions of thy  
enemies. But alas I am a weakewo-  
man, and all my strength lyes in my  
tongue, which will onely serve mee

to

*to deplore thy losse, and that I truly doe from the very bottome of my heart.*

Thus, or to this purpose, questionlesse she bewail'd him dying; but when she once beheld him dead (Love and Beauty being banisht that face) and saw withall their malicious cruelty survive him, when she view'd his very carkasse pierc't, and water together with bloud flowing thence, when she had leisure to imbrace his dead body, to number his wounds, to kisse them, and to Essay with the holy water of her eyes to wash away his stripes: she then was so wholly oppressed with anguish of soule, that she ardently at that instant desired her soule, if possibly, might transigrate

ely grate out of her living body, into  
my his dead one. True it is that many  
affirme she felt not those torments  
which other women endure in  
Child-birth, who are liable to the  
malediction laid upon *Eve*: But if  
at his coming into the world,  
she was not sensible of any paine  
at all, certainly at his going out,  
the griefes of all women contracted  
into one, equals not hers alone.  
And assuredly her sorrow  
was much increased when she saw  
*Mary Magdalen*, and the other women  
so vehemently to grieve,  
whom his death not so nearly concern'd  
as it did her, nor were they  
so able as she to judge of his value.  
Then questionlesse in this, or the  
like phrase she renewed, and redoubled  
her complaints.



O my sweetest Sonne ! I bewaile mine owne, and the wretched condition of all those, whose soules thou hast feasted so many yeares with thy mellifluous Language. My grieve is answerable to my affection. If Samuel lamented the death of a reprobate King, if David wept over wicked Absolon with this exclamation, Absolon my Sonne, O my Sonne Absolon; can my teares be too prodigally powr'd upon thee, who art Sonne to me, and Righteousnesse it selfe? Who shall forbid or hinder me for crying out, Iesus my sweet Sonne, O my sweet Sonne Iesus? If thou didst weepe over Ierusalem, as lamenting her destruction then at hand, shall I not bewaile thy neere approaching end? Thou didst then compassionate the future Ruine of those very stones

stones, which now with a silent grati-  
tude seeme to condole, and weepe for  
thee. When thou cam'st to the Tombe  
of Lazarus, thou wert so farre from  
comprehending the teares of others, that  
thou wepst thy selfe for company. Thy  
owne example then warrants the just-  
nesse of my griefe; for when thou wert  
sleeping, the small paine thou felt'st in  
the sleeping of thy foot was, and ought  
to be more to mee, than the eternall  
torment of Lazarus could be to thee.  
And as thy teares for him weretokens  
of thy humane nature, not signes of  
thy diffidence (in that thou knew'st  
thou would forthwith arise) so are mine  
to thee, witnesses of my wretched e-  
state, not of my distrust, who am as-  
sured of thy speedy resurrection. Nor  
do I onely grieve my owne griefe for  
thy sake, I rejoyce in thy Fa-  
thers Grace, who delivers thee to  
death,

© 2

S. Bernard calls  
this Hebdoma-  
dam poenofam,  
the weeke of pen-  
nance; and the  
high Dutch, Die  
Martyr Wock-  
en, the Martyrs  
weeke.

death, and in thy Charity  
who dost suffer it: So likewise  
in mans behalfe I am griev'd  
that he should be the cursed  
cause of those thy extreme  
torments: for as not to joy in  
the benefits thy death hath  
brought with it, would argue  
his ingratitude, so not to con-  
dole for the tortures that at-  
tend it, would demonstrate  
his cruelty. And here I faith-  
fully promise thee, that both I,  
while life, and thy Church,  
while the world doth last,  
shall yearely spend this dole-  
full \* time of thy Tragical  
expiration in Prayer, fasting,  
severity, of discipline, mace-  
ration of the flesh, and can-  
trition of the spirit, as becomes  
thy mournesfull Mother, and  
thy



gratefull Sponse to doe.

Thus condoling, thus bemoaning hers, and the generall losse, he attended his herse to the Sepulchre provided by *Ioseph*, where never man was laid before; for it was not fit that Incorruptibility should succeed corruption in the same lodging. This fragrant flower was no sooner set in the ground, but she sent many a deare drop after it to fasten it at the root; for she knew within three dayes it should spring up againe, not to grow in the earth, but to be translated into Heaven, there for ever to flourish, and perfume the celestially habitation. Nor were other eyes, saith *Damascen*, closed with his Monument, but watched themselves almost blinde with a

greedy expectation to see the temple of his body built up againe, which three dayes since was destroyed. After many a longing looke she espied the Tombe to open, and her onely joy to issue forth, whom full well she knew by the countenance and figure of his Humanity, but farre better by the cleere proofes of his Godhead; for the Graves delivered up their dead, many of which appeared to their friends in the holy City. Some, and those of great authority in the Church affirme, that after his Resurrection, she of all others saw him first, and whereas the Scripture seemeth to inferre that *Mary Magdalen* first beheld him, they thus expound it, That the Evangelists would not make his Mother the first witnesse of his Resur-

Resurrection (though indeed she was) knowing that her testimony by the Iewes would be more suspected than that of *Mary Magdalen*. I dare not positively conclude any thing herein, but I may safely maintaine that this her delight for his Resurrection, counterpois'd her grieve conceived for his death. In her was now made good that of the Psalmist; *According to the multitude of the griefes of my heart thy Comforts have rejoyced my soule,* and that of her Sonne, *Blessed are they that mourne, for they shall be comforted.*

And who makes question but that she who with such unutterable pleasure discover'd his Resurrection faithfully, and closely waited on him, till his Ascension?

\* Epi-  
phanus  
contra  
hæres. &  
libel.  
Ætij.

She who was as inseparable to him as his shadow, without doubt, was on the Mount \* *Olivet*, with other of the faithfull, when in the sight of them all he ascended. She heard, doubtlesse, his last words, received his last benediction, and her sight waited on him till the clouds imbrac't him, which it in vaine essay'd to penetrate. What Soule not it selfe transported with the view of a heavenly object, can suppose, much lesse expresse what her contentment was when she saw her owne flesh flye above the reach of Envie, into the Armes of Glory? When she beheld this high Priest, (his Sacrifice ended, and God fully appeas'd) enter Heaven there to sit on the right hand of his Father, and to be the uncessant and eternall Mediatour  
be-

betwixt him and man? With bended knees, erected hands, and eyes, she worships him ascending, and when her sight failes, her adoration continues. Her zeale passeth all the orbes betweene him, and her with greater facility, and subtilty then the Lightning shooeth through the Ayre. Great is the vigour and force of the Spirit, when all things else set apart it is wholly intentive on the Meditation of its Creatour. When by contemplation it is separated from the body, it thinkes onely on him, lives onely to him, and is (as it were drown'd) in an inundation of his love. When it hath extinguisht the scorching lawlesse desires of the flesh, and kindled the holy ones of the Spirit; the body rebels no longer, but becomes  
obe-

obedient to it in all things. When it hath once fixed its eyes on this beloved object, it never removeth them thence. When it is once illuminated with the beames of the holy Ghost, it is presently turn'd into all Eye, all Spirit, all Light, no otherwise than those things the fire once layes hold on, are turn'd into fire it selfe. Of those who live in Wedlocke, it is said that they are two in one flesh; and why may it not be said of Christ and the Soule wedded to him, that they are two in one Spirit? And if ever it might be reported of any, surely of this Holy Virgin, who (though she was devided from her Redeemer in Body) yet in soule she was united to him. When her eyes were growne dimme with her so long dwelling  
on

on that part of Heaven where they left, and lost him, she cast them downe on the earth, the poverty whereof she commiserated in that it was deprived of this one Jewell, in value above all it had left. And now She returnes into the holy City not disconsolate, and dejected as other women are when they lose their onely childe; but with a cheerfull look for her Sons victory, who had triumphed not onely over the Jew, but death and hell it selfe. She made her will lacky Gods, and though she desired to be dissolved, and be with Christ, yet since it was his best pleasure she should continue longer here below, she readily assented, resolving by her example on earth, to furnish heaven with Saints. *Dammianus* sayes, that  
after

after her *Sonnes* decease, she remained ten daies in Prayer and Fasting, expecting with a fervent longing, the promised comming of the Spirit. Saint *Luke* witnesseth that fixe score men and women were assembled in one rome, and joyned in hearty prayer, of the which, *Mary* the Mother of *I E S U S* was one. And as he names her last, so her wonted Humility perswades me that she had the last, and \* lowest place, and fate beneath the other sinfull women of inferiour quality, in remembrance of her humble Lord now exalted. And it is more than probable that she was present with the Apostles, when the Holy Ghost came upon them, and that she there received the first fruits of the Spirit. After which time

\*S. Bern-  
lard. In  
ferm. de  
verb.  
Apoca-  
lyp.  
signum  
nagnū.

we



we reade no more of her in holy Writ. For where, and with whom, how strictly, and how piously she liv'd after the Ascension of Christ, till the houre of her death, saith *Idelphonius*, is onely knowne to God the searcher of hearts, and to the Angels her diligent Visitors. The reason which many alledge why neither the rest of her life, nor death are penned by the holy Evangelists is this, that the Apostles were so busied about the conversion of the Iewes and the Gentiles, & enlarging of the Christian Church, That they had no time to set downe the particular Acts of her life after her Sonnes Ascension, nor the severall Circumstances of her death, as where, when, and how she dyed. Some Authours peremptorily  
main.

Serm. 5.  
de As-  
sump.  
Virg.

Damascen. ser.  
de dormit.  
Virg.

Serm. de  
dormit.  
Virg.

maintaine (upon what ground I know not) that she liv'd to her seventieth yeare, and to her last houre dwelt in *Ierusalem*, neare to her Sonnes Sepulchre. Others upon no better warrant averre that she went with *Iohn* into *Asia*, and continued with him at *Ephesus* till her death, and urge the authority of *Ignatius*, who affirms that she wrote to him in these words, *I will come with Iohn to see thee, and thy friends, &c.* Concerning her death, Some avouch that the Apostles, and the most eminent of the Primitive Church, were present at it. *Damascen* saith that Christ was also there in person, and that he thus spake to her: *Come my blessed Mother into the rest I have prepar'd for thee, and that shee thus in way of answer prayed to him: Into*  
thy

thy hands, O my Sonne, I commend  
my Spirit : Receive that deare Soule  
which thou hast preserved free from all  
rebuke. As I will not justifie all  
these their Assertions for true, so  
on the other side I will not con-  
demne them as erroneous, not be-  
ing able to convince them of un-  
truth, and for ought I know, they  
may have pass'd by unwritten  
Tradition from man to man. I  
will therefore affirmatively say  
nothing but this, that most assu-  
redly her death was welcome to  
her, in that she had so often both  
meditated and practised it, having  
many times by austerity, and con-  
templation, departed this life ere  
she left it. If that of *Seneca* be true,  
that to dye well, is to dye willing-  
ly, then certainly she dyed the  
death of the Righteous. She was  
not

not ignorant that Death to the just is no other than a delivery from prison, a laying downe of a burthen, the end of a Pilgrimage, the unmanacling of the Soule, the discharging of a due debt to Nature, the returne into our true Country, the dore that opens into a never fading life, the entrance into the celestiaall Kingdome, and the Visier that was to conduct her to her blessed Saviour, with whom she had mentally conversed ever since he left the earth: Since which time there be who avouch that she never willingly saw any man.

The

# The Assumption .



What honor could to this great Queene be done,  
 More then be taken up, to heaven high  
 And, there, haue GOD for Father, Spoule, & Sonne.  
 The Angells wayte, the world stand wondring by

*Her  
assump-  
tion.*

*Lib. de  
origine  
erroris,  
cap. 16.*

The same modesty I have shew'd in treating of her death, I shall reserve in discoursing of her Assumption, which by many of the Fathers, all of the Romish Church, and some of the Reformed is held for an undoubted truth, though upon no sounder proofes than the former produce concerning her departure hence. *Bullinger* directly backs this opinion. *We doe beleeeve, saith he, that the wombe of the God-bearing Virgin, and the Temple of the holy Ghost, that is, her sacred body, to have beene assumed into heaven. Brentius* leaves it indifferent to us to beleeeve whether or no she ascended in Soule, in body, or both. *It might well be, saith he, that as Enoch was translated in body into heaven, and as many bodies of the Saints did rise with Christ,*

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Christ; So Mary also might in body be assumed into Heaven. But most certain it is that she obtained everlasting Felicity. And some there be who demand why God might not manifest his power by her, privy to so many divine secrets and mysteries, as well as by an Angell, or as by *Elias*, who after long prayer, was taken up in a Fiery Chariot. Some againe, (who hold that the dead who arose with Christ, ascended with him into Glory, and were not againe reduc't into Ashes) thinke the Assumption of Mary altogether as likely.

Homil. 1. in Die Assump. Virgin. See Athanasius on this very point, a Father of great repute, both with the Latines and the Greekes in his serm. in Evang. de sanctissima Deipara. And Iohannes Rivius in his Booke de abusibus Ecclesie though hee dares not maintaine her corporal Assumption, yet hee will not deny it, as being a thing probable enough.

Damasce[n] saith, the  
P 2 works

workes of the Deity are therefore possible, because omnipotent, and that there are some things, which though they are wholly omitted in holy Scriptures, yet upon evident reasons they are believ'd, and exemplifies his position in the Assumption of the Virgin *Mary*. *Dammianus* argues thus, That as conceiving without sinne, shee brought forth her Sonne without paine, a curse laid on all other women: so might it well be that she who was without sinne, might overcome Death, the reward of it. Some goe about to prove it by the Text, *Arise Lord into thy rest, thou, and the Arke of thy Sanctification*. Nay, I have read a moderne Orator, who thus elegantly describes the manner of it: *When, saith hee, the Soule of this Sweet one, reactivated*

*Pf. 131.*

*her*



her body, she arose in Triumph from  
her Sepulcher, and was assumed into  
Heaven. In her passage thither, the  
orbes bowed and bended themselves  
to make her a triumphant Arch  
through which shee might passe in  
greater state. The Sunne with his  
brightest beames imbrac't her, that  
it might be said, A woman was  
cloath'd with the Sunne. The  
Moone stooped to her, that it might be  
divulg'd the Moone was under her  
feet. The brightest of the Starres in-  
termove themselves to make her a  
radiant Crowne, &c. But this de-  
scription is no more theologicall,  
than the consent of the orbes is  
Philosophicall, and is no way  
correspondent to the dignity of  
our Sacred subject, on whose tri-  
umphant entry into Heaven, ha-  
ving beene a faithfull, and reve-

rent Attender, I will now returne to vindicate her honour here on Earth, and make an Apology to Christians (with shame and horror I speake it) for Christs owne Mother.

It may please then the gentle Reader to understand that two questions arise amongst the Moderne Divines. The one whether or no she merited to be the Mother of God; the other which way she could deserve that greatest of Glories. For the first, they affirm that never any Creature merited so great a blessing as the incarnation of Gods owne Sonne. For he sent, say they, his Sonne into the world, not urg'd thereto by our merits, but out of his owne meere Grace and Goodnesse. It

was

was a worke of his Charity, and  
condescending, not of retributi-  
on, or obligation: and therefore  
that he chole not the Virgin *Ma-  
ry* to be the Mother of Christ, as  
she was a Virgin, humble, obedi-  
ent, adorn'd with Faith, Charity,  
and other divine vertues, but be-  
cause God had decreed her to  
beare his onely Sonne, therefore  
his best pleasure was, she should  
be Mistresse of perfections sute-  
able to so high a Calling. Where-  
fore Saint *Paul* saies, Because God  
hath predestinated us, therefore  
he calles, justifies, and glorifies  
us, and not because we are just,  
therefore he electeth us. Againe,  
they argue thus, that all our me-  
rits depend on Christ, and are  
deriv'd from him, and therefore  
she was without all desert before

her Sonne had imparted it to her. That this was well knowne to her, is manifestly proved by her divine Hymne, in which she acknowledgeth all good to proceed from him, and therefore to him ascribeth all honour and glory. Others her Champions, who courageously fight, not onely for her heavenly, but earthly triumph, confesse that she was not prefer'd to that supreme dignity by desert, but by Congruity, as they call it: that is, not that she was absolutely worthy of so great a grace, but that since God had fixed a decree to send his dearly beloved Sonne amongst us, she of all others was the fittest to conceive and beare him. But here againe they differ about the way, in that so many waies they hold her capable of  
this

this inestimable Diadem. Some give the prehemineny to her Virginitie, and say, the love of that drew the Sonne out of the bosome of his Father, into her halloved wombe; and therefore the Text saies not, that a faithfull, an obedient, or an humble shall conceive, but a Virgin. Others attribute this supreme favour to her Faith, by which (as Saint *Paul* demonstrates all the miraculous workes of the old Testament have beene begunne and perfected: Wherefore her Cousin *Elizabeth* said to her, *Blessed art thou, because thou hast beleevd.* Some ascribe this infinite honour done her, to her Humility, to which all other vertues flow, no otherwise than the waters naturally runne to the lowest places. This caus'd her to  
say

say in her gratefull Hymne, *Thou hast regarded the lowlinesse of thy Hand-maid.* Others impute the conferring of this greatest blessing on her, to her obedience, in that she committed all to the will of the highest, with this protestation, *Behold the Hand-maid of the Lord, be it to mee according to thy Word.* Others give her Charity the upper hand, which as Saint *Paul* testifies, gives life and spirit to all other vertues, they being without it no other than dead Images. Lastly, some there are who will not award the Crowne to this or that peculiar vertue residing in her, but to the united Harmony of them altogether; for they say, it is not this string, or that, makes the Musicke, but the accord, and consent of all. For my owne  
part,

part, (Divinity not being the  
sphere wherein my studies  
move) a modest inquisition will  
better become me, than a bold  
and peremptory Conclusion in  
any point of Controversie. Where-  
fore I most humbly submit this,  
and all things else divine, by me  
handled, to the Censure and de-  
termination of the Church of  
*England*, whose not Connivence  
alone, but approbation I know I  
shall have in boldly affirming that  
she was a transcendent Creature,  
not to be ranked in respect of  
her worth, with any of her  
sex, but to have a place assign'd  
her apart, and above them all;  
being not to be considered as a  
meere woman, but as a Type, or  
an Idæa of an Accomplish'd pie-  
ty. They who uphold the latter  
of

of the aforefaid opinions, erre not fo much in my judgement, in the adoring extreame, as fome too fevere maintainers of the former, doe in the neglecting. They are fo farre from praifing her themfelves, that they moft unjuftly deprive her of the praife given her by others. The Puritans in generall, but efpecially the obftinate *non-Conformifts* of this Land, are thofe I meane, who as in their Courfe oratory they called *Queene ELIZABETH, Queene Befse*, So they give this Holy Virgin no higher a ftile, than of  
 \* *Mal, Gods Maide*. They reject all Testimonies of her worth, as  
*Haile Mary full of Grace, The Lord is with thee, and, thou haft found grace with God, and, Hee that is mighty, hath magnified mee, and*  
 All

\* I have  
 both  
 heard  
 thefe irreverent  
 fpeeches,  
 and read  
 them  
 cenfurd



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*All generations shall call mee Blessed, and, Blessed is the wombe that bore thee, and Blessed are the paps that gave thee sucke, and whence comes this that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? and, Blessed art thou amongst women, and, Blessed is the fruit of thy wombe. They abhorre to heare her call'd Domina, Lady, or Deipara, God-bearing, few of them being so learned, even in their owne Faculty, as to know that they who so stile her, thinke not that the God-head proceeds from her, but that she brought forth Christ, in whom was the union of both Natures,*  
and

*in a Manuscript of a most learned Doctour of the English Church. And this is very credible to as such as heare and peruse their illiterate Sermons, full of invectives against the antient Saints, and Fathers of the Church, and abounding with predications of their owne ignorant Brethren.*

and therefore they being inseparable, she must by strong consequence be deliver'd of both God and Man. And why are they deterr'd from giving her these honourable Epithites? Because forsooth they challenge to themselves a greater measure of knowledge, but a lesser of Piety than did their Ancestors. By disclaiming words, and phrases familiar to Antiquity, and by inventing new lesse reverent, and significant; they give all men to understand that they had rather be reputed good Grammarians, than Christians, and had rather give names to the Church, than accept them from her, and cherish prophane Novelties, rather than allow of Reverent Antiquities. They wrest many places of Scripture to prove  
that

that Christ himselfe slighted and rebuked her, which depravations of theirs (were my Readers Turkes) I would draw into the Light and lay their deformity open to all; but it is needlesse (I trust) to informe a Christian, that he who hath said, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, would surely never breake his owne Commandement, and by slighting his Mother, trench upon a sinne of all others most detestable in his sight, Ingratitude. Of one thing I will assure them, till they are good *Marians*, they shall never be good *Christians*; while they derogate from the dignity of the *Mother*, they cannot truly honour the *Sonne*. They are I confesse, much more favourable to her, than the Iewes, but by

by farre more detracting from her than the Turkes, which Assertion of mine is strengthened with evident proofes both out of the Iewish *Thalmud*, and Turkish *Alchoran*. The Iewes call her *Thlua*, as much as to say, Butchereffe, or the wife of a Butcher, and *Sono*, a publike sinner, and *Thmea*, one polluted with all manner of uncleane and filthy lust. And all of their Religion are enjoyned in solemne Prayer made in their Sinagogues thrice every day to curse Christ, his Mother, and all the Christian Sect, as is to be found at large in the third Booke of the *Thalmud*, wholly compos'd of ridiculous Fables, grosse Errors, and horrid Blasphemies. True it is That the Turkish *Alchoran* now  
acknow-

acknowledgeth Christ to be God, and now againe denies him, taking him in at the fore-dore, and shutting him out at the backe, yet doe they hold him the greatest of Prophets next their *Ma-homet*. But his Mother they magnifie above all women that ever breathed this Ayre. Let us heare this Oracle speake, in all things else false, but in this most true. These ensuing are the very formall words of the Alchoran. *O Mary, excellent above all men and women, who perseverest in the study of God onely.* And in another place, *O Mary, God hath chosen thee, and purified thee, hee hath elected thee to make thee famous above the women of all Ages:* and againe, *Mary by behaving her selfe wisely, is guilty neither of Malice, nor any wicked-*  
2 *nesse,*

nesse, which caused us to breath our soule into her. Lastly, that Many men have beene perfect, but no woman was ever found perfect, but Mary the Mother of Iesus. But though truth is to be imbrac't where ever we finde it, yet it will appeare more gracefull in the mouthes of Christians, whose most learned, most eloquent, and most judicious. Doctour, we will prodace, giving this Testimony of this our dearest Lady. *Except (saith he) the holy Virgin Mary, (whom for the honour I owe my Lord and Master, I will not name when sinne is my subject) whom to have had grace infus'd into her, wholly to subdue sinne, wee know by this, that shee was thought worthy to conceive and bring forth him, who assuredly was without sinne : This Virgin, I*  
*say,*

S. Au-  
stin lib.  
de nat.  
& grat.  
cap. 36.

*say, excepted, if we could Recall, and Assemble together all the Saints departed, and should aske them, if they were without sinne, they would unanimously thus answer: If we should say we have no sinne, we deceive our selves, and there is no truth in us. But because the Fathers are no way suspected of neglect towards her, we will spare their verdicts, and chiefly insert their Commendations of her, who were the first Reformers of our Church. Luther shall be their Leader, who saith, That none but the Virgin Mary either was, or ever shall be so holy: That the fruit of her wombe shall be blessed, since no other conceives without pleasure and sinne: and againe, In this is Mary blessed, That so great gifts are given to her, as surpasse humane understanding.*

S. Au-  
stin lib.  
de nat.  
& grat.  
cap. 36.

nesse, which caused us to breath our soule into her. Lastly, that Many men have beene perfect, but no woman was ever found perfect, but Mary the Mother of Iesus. But though truth is to be imbrac't where ever we finde it, yet it will appeare more gracefull in the mouthes of Christians, whose most learned, most eloquent, and most judicious Doctour, we will produce, giving this Testimony of this our dearest Lady. Except (saith he) the holy Virgin Mary, (whom for the honour I owe my Lord and Master, I will not name when sinne is my subject) whom to have had grace infus'd into her, wholly to subdue sinne, wee know by this, that shee was thought worthy to conceive and bring forth him, who assuredly was without sinne : This Virgin, I  
say,



say, excepted, if we could R<sup>e</sup>assemble together all the parted, and should aske them were without sinne, they unanimously thus answer: If say we have no sinne, we ourselves, and there is no tr<sup>u</sup> But because the Father way suspected of neglect her, we will spare their and chiefly insert their adations of her, who were Reformers of our Church shall be their Leas faith, That none but Mary either was, or ever holy: That the fruit of shall be blessed, since no ceives without pleasure and againe, In this is M That so great gifts are as surpasse humane understanding.

Female Directi

For hence all honour and beatitude proceeds, that in the Vniversall humane race one person should be superiour to the rest to whom none should be equall, because one and the same Sonne is common to her with the heavenly Father. This he applyes to that saying of Mary. *Hee that is mighty hath magnified mee, &c.* The same Author in another place sayes, *Mary is our Mother, Christ our Brother, and God our Father, and that all this is true, the Faithfull by effect doe finde. Calvin calls her his Mistresse. Wee willingly, saith he, take Mary for our Mistresse, to whose doctrine and precepts we are obedient.* \* *Erasmus* stiles her his

\* *Thogh*  
*Erasmus*  
*was not a*

*Reformer of our Church, yet he is much suspected by the Romish Church, and most serviceable to the Protestant in the setting out of the Fathers.*

Sa-

Savioreffe. Oecolampadius thus delivers his approbation of her. *I trust in God it shall never be said of me, that I did oppose the dignity of Mary, towards whom to be never so little ill affected, I hold to be a most certaine signe of a Reprobate minde. She who is above all, Queene of all, whom God above all hath honoured, should not she be esteemed amongst all the most eminent? Bucerus protesteth, That a godly minde will not judge but charitably and piously of her, who brought forth Christ our Lord: Bullingerus concludes; If Mary be blessed amongst all women, and to bee pronounced blessed by all Nations, most cursed are the Iewes, who never cease to revile and slander her; and most unhappy are those Counterfeit Christians, who (being little better than Iewes) robbe her of*

*the praise due to her. Needs must shee  
be indued with a singular most select,  
and perpetuall Virginity and purity,  
who is especially chosen by God to be  
the Temple of his Sonne, and the Mo-  
ther of the most holy. Now if any of  
these contradict themselves by  
pulling downe in other places  
those Trophies of her praise  
which here they haue erected,  
they are to be answered as the  
Satyre did the Man with whom  
he said he would no longer con-  
verse, because he saw hot and cold  
breath to issue from the same  
Mouth. But to leave them; All  
parts of the world have produced  
Admirers of her worth.*

*Syria*

Syria hath brought forth  
Epbraim.

Antiochia Saint Chryso-  
stome.

Capadocia Saint Basill, and  
Saint Nazianzen.

Constantinople, Germanus and  
Proclus.

Dalmatia, Saint Hierome.

Germany, Rupertus, Alber-  
tus, and Agrippa.

England, Beda.

France, Bernhard.

Spaine, Alphonsus.

Italy, Aquinas and Bonauen-  
ture.

*Affrick, Saint Cyprian, and  
Saint Austin.*

*Greece, Dionysius Arcopagi-  
ta, &c.*

To these succeed famous  
Christian Poets, antient and  
Moderne, who have written  
Pannegyricks upon her, as  
*Beda.*

*Gregorius Nazianzenus.*

*Innocentius Pontifex.*

*Actius Sanazarus.*

*Adam de Sancto victore.*

*Alcimus Avitus.*

*Antonius Muretus.*

*Aurelius Prudentius.*

*Bap-*

*Baptista Mantuanus.*

*Claudianus.*

*Franciscus Petrarcha.*

*Godfridus Viterbiensis.*

*Hieronymus Vida.*

*Paulinus.*

*D. Philippus Menzelius.*

*Rudolphus Agricola.*

*Sedulius.*

*Venantius Fortunatus.*

To these I adde many Em-  
perours, Princes, and Princel-  
ses, and a world of devout  
great ones, who have beene  
her professed admirers, as  
*Constantine the great.*

*Charles*

*Charles the great.*

*Pulcheria Augusta.*

*Henry the second, Empe-  
rour.*

*Alphonfus the chaste in  
Spaine.*

*Edo'vardus in Hungarie.*

*Bolislavus in Polonia.*

*Venceflavus in Bohemia.*

AN



All which are Canonized for Saints, and have erected and dedicated Temples to her Memory. Neither have the Princes of this our Ile beene defective in doing her all possible honour, and in Consecrating Chappels and Temples to her Memory. *Fredericke* the third Emperour, made the Contemplation of her, almost his onely food. *Stephanus*, King of *Hungarie*, called his kingdom the *Marian Family*. In this glorious Family, whole kingdoms and Common-wealths have enrolled themselves. My Arithmeticke will not serve mee to number all those who have Registered their names in the Sodalitie of the Rosary of this our blessed Lady, the originall of which

which is derived from the battaile of *Naupactun*, gain'd by *John* of *Austria*, and the Christians, which victory was attributed to her intercession with her Sonne. The Colonian Sodallity first instituted, had out of *Lovaine*, 4000. out of *Brabant*, 30000. out of *Gueldria*, 4000. out of *Holland* and *Zeland*, 7000. &c. Many holy Orders also are of this Sodality, as the Benedictines, the Cistertians, the Franciscans, the Carthusians, and many others. If all these Testimonies and Examples of great worthy and pious people will not move us to honour her, we shall be judg'd both unworthy of this life, and ignorant of that better to come. For shame let not us alone deny her that honour and praise which all the world allowes her.

After

After these impartiall witnesses  
of her worth, we will place those  
divine priviledges imparted to her  
by the Almighty, for which we  
have (if that alone were sufficient)  
the Authority of many pious,  
learned men.

First, they affirme, That her *1 Pri-*  
chaste eyes sent forth such divine *vilidge.*  
beames that (though her Loveli-  
esse moved not onely all mindes  
to honour her, and all Eyes to gaze  
on hers) yet they never kindled an  
unholy fire in the most Adulterate  
bosome. A sacred priviledge pe-  
culiar to this Saint alone; for it  
was the will of her omnipotent  
Sonne, that neither Sathan nor his  
Ministers should conspire the o-  
verthrow of that chiefe Temple  
of

of his Spirit, which his flesh had Be  
inhabited so long, nor any impure tho  
thought ayme at the mudding of he  
this purest Fountaine. Whether wh  
her prophetick Soule foresaw the ny  
snares of the ungodly, and so  
shun'd them, they say not, once  
for certaine they averre, that no  
Temptations aym'd at her, broke he  
like Haile against a Rocke, nor he  
could all the Engines of the be  
world, the flesh, and the Divell sta  
hurt her more, then can the va vo  
pours arising from the earth, reach If  
the holy inhabitants of Heaven. on  
And this opinion (for ought I wh  
know, I submit it to better judge re)  
ments) may without, or profana  
tion, or blasphemy, be admitted  
into all honest bosomes: for if be bo  
yond the power of nature he pre ou  
served *Ionas* entire in the Whales ne  
Belly,

had Belly, if he protected *Daniel* from the ravenous Lyons, should not he secure her from Corruption whom he had adorn'd with so many vertues and dignities ?

Next, they hold that she was not onely without blemish, but her very lookes sent forth such heavenly rayes, that whosoever beheld them, drew thence a vessel of fire that never went out, and vowed an everlasting Virginity. If this be a truth, it is a curious one, and it is not materiall at all whether or no it be beleev'd, or rejected.

Thirdly, that she conceiv'd and bore her Sonne, not onely without paine (the common Curse annexed to Childe-bearing) but with

2 *Priviledge.*

3 *Priviledge.*

with infinite delight. This also is a Curiosity, and of no importance whether it be swallowed or no.

Fourthly and lastly, that she had a Frigidity of Soule, which quencht in her all heat of carnall concupiscence. This last privilege is imployed in the first, and may perchance safely be received. The truth is, we may securely give her all humane attributes (not encroaching on the divine) for she was in dignity above all, but God himselfe. Faith and Charity, the fulnesse of the Law were in her at full. She was in an active and contemplative life, admirable. The Tongue esteemed the worst part in a woman, was in her the best, which well might charme Eares, offend them it could not. Her Soule

Soule weigh'd her Conceptions,  
and gave them a rayment of ver-  
tues owne hiew; for certainly so  
cleere thoughts were apparell'd  
in as faire words. She who both  
after her conception, and at other  
times is commended to us by the  
sacred Scriptures, for laying up all  
holy Sayings in her heart, can we  
imagine that she could speake a-  
misse? Neither could she commit  
any undecent Act, who liv'd in a  
Light to others inaccessible. They  
who maintaine that for a time the  
whole Militant Church was in her  
alone, have probability to backe  
them; for I know not in whom  
else it could remaine, when his  
Apostles, Disciples, Friends, Kin-  
dred, and all others forsooke  
Christ, she onely excepted, who  
would not leave him, who from

R

before

before his birth, had stucke to her.  
I will conclude with this Assertion, That if ever the Soule of any mortall enjoyed here on earth the embraces of her heavenly Spouse, and tooke from him a kisse sweeter than all the Easterne Odours, this was she.

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And

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*And here, O blessed Virgin!*  
I leave to discourse further of thee, and direct my speech to thee. O thou eternall glory of thy sexe! had the Queene of Sheba seene thee, as she did Salomon, shee had not so soone beene delivered out of the Trance into which her Admirati-  
on cast her. In thee shee might have discovered all the perfecti-  
ons of which woman kinde is ca-  
pable, who wer't indeed virtu-  
ally thy sexe. In thee Aspatia might have found her Modesty,  
Livia her Prudency, Sul-  
ma

Apo-  
strophe  
Autho-  
ris.

her Majestie and Gravity, the  
 Cornelia her Patience, Lucre- sub  
 tia her Chastity, Porcia her so j  
 Fortitude, Tanaquill her In- cha  
 dustry, Plautina her frugality, wo  
 and all these in eminency. But cie.  
 why talke I of the Heathen to M  
 thee, who didst not onely out- yok  
 strip in manifold vertues all the in  
 Femall, but the Masculine Saints roa  
 themselves? Thou didst excell wh  
 Abel in Innocency, Abraham life  
 in Faith, Isaac in Obedience, Pa  
 David in Gentlenesse, the Pro- ve  
 phets and Apostles in Piety, and lea  
 the Martyrs in Patience. O thou ba  
 whom Heaven would have of sti  
 the

ty, the same constancy, purity, and  
re- sublimity with it selfe, thou art  
per so farre from having an equall,  
In- that all thy sexe cannot afford a  
ty, worthy witnesse of thy Excellen-  
ut cies! O thou Mother of the true  
to Moses, who never put on the  
ut- yoke of Pharaoh, but stood free  
be in the midst of E: ypt! Thou  
ts rodde of Iesse, alwaies straight,  
ell who broughtst forth the fruit of  
m life! thou wert here a terrestriall  
ce, Paradise, whereinto Serpent ne-  
o- ver entred, on which Gods ma-  
nd lediction was never impos'd, and  
ou hast no doubt, now in the coele-  
of stiall Paradise a conspicuous  
be

R 3                      seate

seate above all the Angelicall orders, and next thy glorifi'd Sonne himselfe. For if Christs promise to all his fellow feeling members, that if they suffer with him, they shall raigne with him, if they dye with him, they shall live with him; what eminent place in Heaven shalt thou have assigned thee, who i. soule diast suffer for him more, than all his Martyrs? O thou bashfull Morne that diast precede and produce our Sunne! Thou Circumscription (if I may so say) of the uncircumscribed! Thou roote to this Herbe of Grace! Thou Mother of our Crea-

*Creatour! Thou Nurse to him by  
whom all things are fed! Thou  
Comprehender of the incompre-  
hensible! Thou bearer of him  
whose word sustaines the Globes!  
Thou who didst impart flesh to  
him, who wanted nothing else!  
Thou Sarah, thou Mother of  
many Nations, who brought  
forth our Isaac, our Laughter,  
when a just sorrow conceiv'd for  
a losse esteem'd irreparable had  
clouded this inferiour world! O  
pardon, gracious Princeesse, my  
weake endeavours to summe up  
thy value, which come as short  
of thee, as my head does of Hea-*

ven. Nothing that is not it selfe glorified, can expresse thy glory to the height. Thou deserv'st a Quire of Queenes here, and another of Angels in Heaven to sing thy praises. Were all the Earths brood, the droppes, the sands of the sea, and the starres of heaven tongued, they could not all expresse thee so well, as silent extasie. I confesse, O my sweetest Lady! that now I have said all I can of thee, I have but but done like Timanthes, a great Master in his Art, who being to expresse the vastnesse of a Cyclops in a small table, drew  
onely

onely his Thumbe, by which the spectators might judge of his large proportion. To give thee an estimation answerable to thy merit, is a thing impossible: I must therefore be content to doe by thee, as the ancient Heathen did by the Images of their Gods, on whose heads, when by reason of their height, they could not place the Crownes, offer'd to their Deities, they humbly layd them at their feet.

FINIS.